HOW DIPLOMATS MAKE WAR

HOW DIPLOMATS MAKE WAR

BY

FRANCIS NEILSON

Member of Parliament, January, 1910–December, 1915.



The whole theory of the universe is directed to one single individual—namely, to You.

—WALT WHITMAN.

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PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

Now that it is necessary to publish a second edition of this book, and as I have resigned my seat in Parliament, I wish to take this opportunity of making the name of the author public.

I am grateful to my friend, Mr. Albert Jay Nock, for his kindness in editing the work and fathering the book upon its first appearance.

FRANCIS NEILSON.

New York, April 17th, 1916.

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HOW DIPLOMATS MAKE WAR

CHAPTER I

1815

"WHAT, speaking in quite unofficial language, is the net purport and upshot of war? To my own knowledge, for example, there dwell and toil, in the British village of Dumdrudge, usually some five hundred souls. From these, by certain 'Natural Enemies' of the French, there are successively selected, during the French war, say thirty able-bodied men: Dumdrudge, at her own expense, has suckled and nursed them; she has, not without difficulty and sorrow, fed them up to manhood, and even trained them to crafts, so that one can weave, another build, another hammer, and the weakest can stand under thirty stone avoirdupois. Nevertheless, amid much weeping and swearing, they are selected; all dressed in red; and shipped away, at the public charges, some two thousand miles, or say only to the south of Spain; and fed there till wanted. And now to that same spot in the south of Spain, are thirty similar French artisans, from a French Dumdrudge, in like manner wending: till at length, after infinite effort, the two parties come into actual juxtaposition; and Thirty stands fronting Thirty, each with a gun in his hand. Straightway the word 'Fire!' is given: and they blow the souls out of one another; and in the place of sixty brisk useful craftsmen, the world has sixty dead carcasses, which it must bury, and anew shed tears for. Had these men any quarrel? Busy as the Devil is, not the

smallest! They lived far enough apart; were the entirest strangers; nay, in so wide a Universe, there was even, unconsciously, by Commerce, some mutual helpfulness between them. How then? Simpleton! their Governors had fallen out: and, instead of shooting one another, had the cunning to make these poor blockheads shoot.— Alas, so it is in Deutschland, and hitherto in all other lands; still as of old, 'what devilry soever Kings do, the Greeks must pay the piper!'"

— Carlyle, *Sartor Resartus.*

Within a year of the centenary of Waterloo, Europe is again engaged in a conflict, in which three Powers are united in awful bonds, to overthrow another military tyrant. Another hundred years of treaties, alliances, understandings, secret engagements, and ententes, leave Europe now in the throes of Gargantuan battles, the like of which Napoleon never in his wildest dreams imagined possible. A century ago, the vast majority of the millions of Europe believed it was absolutely necessary for nations to spend every energy in subduing the French Emperor, because he was a danger to the peace of the world and a menace to democracy. Twenty years of carnage, over fields extending from Moscow to Corunna, were spent in crushing the might of the "hero-monster" who rose at Toulon to be master of Europe. When at last the aim of the allies was accomplished, and the "man of blood" was safely isolated on St. Helena, Europe knew little peace, nor did Britain rest from the labours of the arsenal. The nations of Europe did not disband their armies. They did not beat their swords into ploughshares, nor did they decide that battleships would be required no more.

All wars we are told are fought in the interest of the people. It is their land, their nation, their homes, that are at stake. It is their pride, their honour, their patriotism, that are called upon by recruiting statesmen when a diplomatic squabble is to be settled by force of arms. The same appeals were broadly made one hundred years ago that are made to-day. But what do the people, the workers, get in return for all the vast sacrifices they make? The economic, industrial, and financial condition of England, for over a generation after the Second Treaty of Paris, was not a whit less miserable than when her people suffered from the ravages of Napoleonic wars. National distress and widespread disaffection brought agitation and revolt. Riots in the large towns, and rick-burnings in the agricultural districts, were every-day occurrences. For seventeen years artisans and labourers suffered terrible privations. Parliament gave little or no heed to the lamentations of the people who had supplied the armies for Wellington and had made a thousand sacrifices to crush the militarism of Napoleon. After the downfall of military France, diplomacy secured for a time the privileges of some small nations, but Parliament did not secure the rights of those men who had directly and indirectly helped to conquer the man who, no matter what he thought of national rights, had a better conception of individual rights than British statesmen of the time. Parliament was indeed more concerned in those days in transporting to Van Diemen's Land men who had the courage to ask the nation's representatives to observe the first duty of a Parliament: to grant economic, political, and religious rights to all men. National honour, pride,

and patriotism did not run to that. The rights of individuals could wait, but the privileges of nations were urgent affairs.

The aftermath was enough to satisfy the most war-loving patriot. Over £530,000,000 were added to the National debt. The honour and glory of an all-conquering nation filled the empty stomachs of the people, who knew they were at last safe from the atrocities of the Corsican terror. Carping critics, ignorant, no doubt, of Britain's superb achievements on land and sea, said that corn at eighty shillings a quarter was a poor return for all the people had done to save Europe from the mailed fist of Napoleon. But, it was ever thus. There have been unpatriotic critics in all ages. It may be presumed that after Agincourt some stay-at-home grumbled about the net result of Henry's campaigns. In extenuation it might be said that a short-sighted people may not expect to see the political significance of the work of kings and diplomatists. Patience, a virtue carried to excess by the people of warring nations, is required to an almost unwarrantable degree if one generation is to appreciate the full diplomatic glory the next one will enjoy. Still, peace is not consummated when war on foreign fields is transferred to the villages and towns of one's own country. And even when all the military nations of the earth stand at ease,— not only indulge in an armed peace but disarm altogether,— the people will suffer without cessation all the horrors of economic and industrial war.

But this war is different from any other that has been waged. We are told it is a " holy " war; some say it is a " spiritual " war; there seems to be no

doubt in the minds of most journalists that it is a "just" war. The end of it is to be a democratic millennium. No one is to be left out of the apotheosis of the nations. Russia will be the freest land on earth; Pole and Jew, Finn and Slav, will all unite in a liberty which, in the press, already touches the confines of licence. No more Balkan troubles, no more aggrandizement, no more envy, greed, or bullying. Disarmament is only one of the blessings which will come to the race of man, after the Kaiser is shut up on the Island of Juan Fernandez, or some other pacific spot.

It is a pity Nietzsche died before he completed his *Transvaluation of All Values*. When the bureaucrats of Prussia and Russia regard the interests of all Germans and Russians as a first charge on the departments, then we shall not know what to do with many volumes that now occupy so much space on our book-shelves. New values will be necessary when the churches cry, "We have no work to do." And when war is known no more the woes of the armament ring will call for a system of new values beyond the inventive powers of the sanest superman that ever lived. But what will the heathen think of it all? A real Christendom in the place of a sham Christendom will revolutionize everything that mortal man can think of.

Unfortunately history, that rude awakener from such dreams, jeers at all the fine prognostications of the journalists and statesmen of to-day, and makes us pause while we ponder the question: "Will men, much less Governments, change so quickly?" The noble aspirations of men writing under the strain of a great war are not always warranted unshrink-

able. Written in the heat of wartime they suffer when the chill of peace sets in. Still, a touch of Pharisaism is a virtue at a time like this, for it makes us forget our vices.

Now that the public is reading the works of authors whose names it never heard of before, it is difficult for a politician who does not see eye to eye with the present Government to say anything profound. The simple middle-class household that was content last spring with the *Daily Mail,* or the *Daily News,* at breakfast, will now take nothing less than copious extracts from Treitschke or Sybel. Since Mr. Archer discovered *Thus Spake Zarathustra,* no afternoon tea is complete without a discussion on *A Genealogy of Morals.* Sociology, Carson, and suffragettes are no longer subjects of interest now that Bernhardi and Beyerlein are household authors. No war was ever the means of discovering so much literature as this. Everybody is so learned that a person of limited knowledge must perforce sit mute in a club, in a restaurant, in a railway train, or in a bus, while some stranger who has read the *Times* expounds the philosophy of some German whose name he cannot pronounce.

But Germany has had no monopoly of Treitschkes and Bernhardis, not any more than Britain has had a monopoly of Cremers and Carnegies. The sentiments of Bernhardi were expressed in many a home in Britain long before *Germany and the Next War* was published. The notion that wars are necessary for the development of the race is not new; and years before Kipling tickled the souls of British Jingoes, a large section of the people of Britain worshipped the god of battles. The wife of an archbishop bap-

tized a dreadnaught not so long ago. During the Boer War, when Britain was busy attending to the "rights" of small nations in South Africa, ministers of the gospel gave the Prince of Peace the cold shoulder. The most popular pictures on the walls of church schools were copies of Maclise's *Battle of Waterloo,* and *Battle of Trafalgar.* Church armies and juvenile regiments of various kinds have been fostered by the clergy; and "leaders of thought," and soldiers, and war office organizers, have joined societies founded for the propaganda of peace,— so that the useful doctrine, "the best way to keep the peace is to be prepared for war," should not be lost sight of altogether. Scarcely one society for the propaganda of useful knowledge has escaped its Jingo. The Psychical Society had a prominent member in the man who led the Jingoes in 1909, when the cry was, "We want eight, and we won't wait." This Jingo made an attempt to show his sympathy with Bergson when in the debate in the House of Commons, on August 3rd, 1914, he said the speeches of the pacifists, who had the courage to express their opinions, were "the very dregs and lees of the debate." Perhaps he was conscious that "We trail behind us, unawares, the whole of our past; but our memory pours into the present only the odd recollection or two that in some way complete our present situation." It is most strange what a revolution British thought has passed through since the beginning of August, 1914. No one seems to remember what the nation suffered from 1908 to the end of July, 1914. No one remembers that the contempt of the militarists of Britain for the advocates of peace at home, was just as deep as that of

Bernhardi for the pacifists of Germany. It seems to be forgotten that the section of the British press given over to the crusade of hatred and greed, pushed their campaigns as unscrupulously as did any Krupp-owned journal in Germany. Forgotten are the armament firms that welcomed half-pay officers to their boards of directors. Forgotten, too, are those leaders of religious bodies who did not hesitate to associate themselves with the business of warfare, and its dividends.

But all these methods of stimulating interest in the destruction of life and property were, we are told, not to be held parallel with similar designs in Germany. Not by any means. Even comparison is not to be tolerated for a moment. For the Germans have a war-lord who is absolute; a melodramatic villain, jealous of Britain's might. Besides, our warlike preparations were not made for the purpose of aggrandizement; our objects were pacific, our intentions laudable. Defence, not defiance, was our motto. Nothing could be clearer. We had as much territory as any one but a Kaiser could wish for, and all we asked of other nations was to let us alone in the enjoyment of our vast empire. Britain had only one desire, and that was to keep what she had got. Germany, on the other hand, had a strictly limited area for expansion, because she came rather late into the game of pushing afield. Her ambitions were behind the times. Still, though it was unfortunate for her colonial policy, it was but natural, all the same, that she should want to get from us what we took from others. Neither Machiavelli nor Plato understood the British position. "Might is Right,"—up to a point. When

an empire is established nowadays nothing can be right that questions its fundamental notion, that God sanctioned its making. "Might is Right," ceased to have any virtue as a doctrine, once the British Empire was formed. Plato's notion that Justice is the end for which a state exists, is classical; in modern days, no such Utopian idea can exist.

When the Kaiser was studying the law of nations, Bismarck should have taught him those two useful maxims (which every monarch should in future memorize): "First come, first served," and "Possession is nine points of the law." It is true Napoleon did not always let those useful precepts guide him; but it must be remembered that a century has passed since his methods of laying the basis of an empire upset so many Europeans. Besides, Napoleon was a mere amateur at making war, and waging war. His Government never voted £52,000,000 in a single year for naval purposes. In these days a boy scout could tell him things about explosives and submarines that would make his hair stand on end; so far has science carried us onward and progress left the victor of Jena behind. Perhaps the writers of books on Napoleon do not know how harmful their works are in giving false notions of what can be accomplished by studying strategy and empire-making; the monarchs and generals that have been led astray in this respect are legion. Even so, it is not to be inferred that this war would not have taken place if the Kaiser had not taken to reading books on Napoleon. The Emperor of Germany may, however, sometimes console himself with the thought, that Britain one hundred years ago said of Napoleon what she now says of the Kaiser,

and that Napoleon, long dead, has somehow lived it all down.

Nevertheless, our political leaders and newspaper editors tell us we are fighting in the interest of the people. That is what the Kaiser is telling the German. The Czar is telling the same story to the Russian. And the French Government no doubt assures the disciples of Sorel that the carnage is for the benefit of the people. It is a great time for democracy,— surely never so many statesmen and diplomatists talked so affectionately of it before. One editor told us that the Triple Entente is no alliance formed for the purpose of keeping their peoples in subjection. Rather a nasty slap at the Monarchial League! — still, it is just as well we should know the truth about the Triple Entente. Another editor, eager to set his readers right as to why we are fighting, said, "Austria and Germany must be thrashed because the principles of democracy must be maintained by Britain, whose duty it has always been to keep open the road of progress." All seem to be agreed the principles of democracy are at stake. No country thinks of putting these principles into practice, but somehow they seem to be worth fighting for. And the fight might cost twice as much as was spent on beating Napoleon, ten times as many lives might be sacrificed as the nations lost during the whole of Napoleon's campaigns, and one hundred times as many wounded and crippled, and then in the end, the people find themselves economically, industrially, and financially, worse off than they were in 1830; no matter, the Kaiser must be crushed, for he is a menace to peace and a danger

to the democracies of Europe. One hundred years ago, the London *News* told its readers that:

"The situation of this country at the *successful* close of a long war is singular, and worthy of observation. It is a fact that peace, instead of having brought us security, retrenchment, relief from burthens, or extended commerce, to enable us to bear them, has left us all the expenses of war, without gaining to us the friendship of the very Powers for whom we undertook it. Of all the countries, that one against which we fought has come out of the contest with the least harm; and that which set all the rest in motion has suffered in the highest degree."

That was the way wars were conducted in the days of Palmerston and Canning; and no one can say the men of 1814 were 'prentice hands at diplomacy or war.

There is, however, one thing certain about this war; and that is, it cannot go on for ever. All particular wars have an end; but there has so far been no end to the power that makes wars. When the might of Britain in 1815 put an end to the military achievements of the "monster," who poor English villagers believed made a daily meal of boiled babies with brain sauce, it did not alter one tittle of the real dangers to peace. Kings, and courts, and diplomatists flourished just as strongly in the nineteenth century as they did in the eighteenth. The god of battles was still worshipped by huge congregations; and the god was busy enough finding new fields for military operations years before Victoria was crowned. His activities roamed over enormous areas: there were wars in Burma, Man-

chester, Algiers; the Triple Entente destroyed the Turkish and Egyptian fleets at Navarino; there were revolutions in Spain, Portugal, a second revolution in France, and Belgium revolted from the Netherlands; the kingdom of Poland was abolished, and all that remained of its territory was swallowed up by Russia. In Britain there were riots, plots to murder the King's Ministers; and Parliament was busy for a number of years passing legislation which restricted the freedom of the people. In 1832, the victor of Waterloo was obliged to barricade his house against the fury of a London mob. Seventeen years after his triumph over Napoleon, when he saved Europe, and showered blessings upon the democracies extending from the Urals to Bantry Bay, it was ungenerous, to say the least, that Londoners, of all citizens, should be guilty of inflicting such indignities on the Iron Duke, merely because he was opposed to a Reform Bill.

The diplomatic machine, stronger by far than any military organization, did its work night and day in the Chancelleries of Europe, no matter who was Foreign Minister. Castlereagh, Canning, or Goderich, the figure-head could do little to change the fixed methods of the permanent officials. Canning might be more liberal-minded than Castlereagh, but Canning could not affect the policies of all the embassies, nor inculcate radical ideas in all the officials at the Foreign Office. The machine was against change, for the whole system of parasitism had its roots firmly embedded in diplomacy. It was a social growth which extended its privileges to one class. It was beyond the efforts of any Foreign Minister to uproot the Upas tree of traditional diplomacy;

the Minister was here to-day and gone to-morrow; diplomacy remained.

There is only one way to bring about a change. Only the people, the people of the leading nations, acting in concert, can perform that formidable task. The people of England have made great efforts to bring about a change in education, in the franchise, in taxation, and in many other things, but they have never attacked the diplomatic machine. The reason is because the people of England and of Europe have not yet connected diplomacy with the horrors of war. Diplomacy carries on its work in secret; it is removed from the notice of the general public. Moreover, an utterly false idea has crept into the minds of people that the term diplomacy is synonymous with peace. When a too curious person at a political meeting has put a question on foreign affairs, consternation has struck the audience. How should any one be so mad as to question the virtue of our diplomacy? Besides, foreign policy is something too complicated for the understanding of any one living in a house assessed at less than £100. Thus the machinations of diplomats seldom reach the mind of the vast majority of the electors. Secrecy being essential to the existence of the Foreign Office, it is not surprising that the public takes so little interest in its work. Even in an assembly reputed so free as the British House of Commons, its members, when they question the Minister for Foreign Affairs, are often silenced by the reply, that "it would not be to the public interest to give the information." Secrecy encircles a Foreign Secretary with mysterious walls. His work, like the mole's, is subterranean. This is not always his fault; the

best Foreign Secretary must be a victim of the system, and what he does must be accepted by an electorate,— ignorant in these affairs,— as labours performed in the public interest.

It is a pity so many do not know all the wonderful schemes carried out by a vigilant Foreign Office for their individual well-being. How few know that there is a net-work of agents all over the world, watching and waiting for opportunities to add another sandy acre to the area of the empire; frustrating the attempts of alien agents to take that acre from us; making friendships to preserve the balance of power in Uganda or Tibet; allotting territory in Africa and Asia, so that the natives will not quarrel among themselves for more land than is good for them. Think of the value of the work of these agents, helping concessionaires to stir the lazy natives into labours only known in Christian countries! It is a shame the electors cannot picture these agents, carrying the torch of Liberty in one hand, and the bandage from the eyes of Justice in the other; undertaking all the irksome business of painting red dots on the map of the world, for the glory and the preservation of the British Empire,— when they are not engaged in countries where dreams of colonization are governed by the size of the nation's navy. It is so good for the British people to have a department occupied from one year's end to another in seeing that the slum-dwellers of our great cities, towns, and villages, have a place in the sun; and that the missionaries we do not need at home shall not lose their lives abroad. The public learns slowly; and nothing is heeded so little as the lesson of the marvellous " utilities " of diplomacy.

CHAPTER II

"SCRAPS OF PAPER"

Alas, the country! how shall tongue or pen
Bewail her now *un*country gentlemen?
The last to bid the cry of warfare cease,
The first to make a malady of peace.
For what were all these country patriots born?
To hunt, and vote, and raise the price of corn?
But corn, like every mortal thing, must fall,
Kings, conquerors, and markets most of all.
And must ye fall with every ear of grain?
Why would you trouble Buonaparte's reign?
He was your great Triptolemus; his vices
Destroy'd but realms, and still maintain'd your prices;
He amplified to every lord's content
The grand agrarian alchymy hight rent.
Why did you chain him on yon isle so lone?
The man was worth much more upon his throne.
True, blood and treasure boundlessly were spilt,
But what of that? the Gaul may bear the guilt.
— Byron, *The Age of Bronze.*

How many of the journalists writing articles on the present trouble know the history of the "scrap of paper" that was the *casus belli?* The *Encyclopædia Britannica* is not so popular now as the works of Professor Treitschke, "who had brought historical teaching into contact with real life, and had created a public opinion more powerful than the laws" (to quote Lord Acton), but, if the bible of

sciolists is not the fashion, then a glimpse at Evelyn Ashley's *Life of Lord Palmerston* will yield some information as to motives of the Powers in drawing up the Treaties of 1831 and 1839.

Ashley describes the squabbles of the Dutch and the Belgians, and defends Palmerston for tearing one of the main provisions from the Treaty of Vienna, which united Holland and Belgium. When Napoleon fell, we desired to bring these countries together, to fortify parts of them, and relieve ourselves from the anxiety of having to watch a coast which had been hostile and extremely dangerous during the years of Napoleon's might. There was no question of the rights of Belgians in those days; our interest in the affair was one of convenience — how to keep Belgium from falling into the hands of the French. We were, however, between the devil and the deep sea. Ashley says: "To side with Holland would have been contrary to all the traditions which Palmerston had inherited from Canning. To acquiesce in French aggrandizement would have been little short of a national disgrace." Opinion in Britain was divided; there was no wholehearted outburst of national indignation at the action of Holland. Palmerston's methods were the subject of some fierce attacks. The Foreign Minister had no easy road to travel at any time during the negotiations. Talleyrand was as keen to look after the interests of France as Palmerston was to safeguard the coasts of Britain. The tangle and the wrangle of the settlement was of the order of low comedy, and any one under the impression that the separation of Belgium from Holland was accomplished by the five Powers with one mind and solemn behaviour, should

spend an hour reading the utterly discreditable proceedings. They all snarled and quarrelled like a pack of fishwives. Neither Dutch nor Belgians were pleased when the settlement was made; indeed the King of Holland very soon defied the Allies, and showed his contempt for the "scrap of paper," which the Powers were in no haste to sign. After the Treaty of 1831 was consummated by the signature of Russia, the last power to sign, on May 4th, 1832, it was not long before the neutral states, Holland and Belgium, had another row, this time about Luxembourg and Limbourg. Finally, the matter was adjusted, and a new "scrap of paper" was signed April 19th, 1839, at London. Treaty-making was not the solemn affair the journalists of to-day imagine; and the makers of treaties were not always actuated by the purest motives. Their actions and methods were often enough comparable only to those of a certain class of horse-dealer, whose bargains satisfy neither the seller nor the buyer.

Anyway, the balance of power was secured, and there seemed no reason why any European should ever think of going to war again. For decades the term "balance of power" meant nothing at all to millions of men who sweated their lives away — when they did not give themselves as food for cannon — to help pay the bill for maintaining the balance. It has always been a shifting question; for after sacrificing thousands of lives and spending millions of pounds in attempts to preserve the balance, the result of battles has seldom left the balance of power where it was. Never was such a wobbly thing invented to inflict so much misery on mankind. And diplomatists, as a rule, have had a poor opinion

of it. They have many times discovered, after a war, that little or nothing had been gained by all the fighting. Lord Granville, in 1887, wrote to the Duke of Argyll that his own belief was that the Crimean War was a great misfortune, and that either Palmerston or Aberdeen alone would have prevented it. Yet, no war was ever so popular. It is interesting to read Lord Edmund Fitzmaurice on that blunder. He said:

"In order to find a sufficient explanation of the great decision for which Lord Granville had his share of responsibility we must look further. In the arrogant attitude of Russia since 1815 towards Europe, to which she seemed hardly to belong, in the ever increasing insolence of that attitude since the accession of the Emperor Nicholas, in the existence of a threatening military autocracy rendered doubly odious by half-mystical claims, and in the translation of those claims into action against liberty not merely in Poland or Hungary but all over Europe, is to be found the explanation of the Crimean War. These things had produced an atmosphere of alarm and hatred out of which the lightning was certain sooner or later to leap. No quarrel about the Holy Places, no dispute about the Christian subjects of the Porte, could possibly have dragged an unwilling Prime Minister to associate the history of his Government with a war against a country to which he was, to say the least, not personally hostile. It was the belief which animated the people that western civilization was threatened in its essential conceptions of individual and political liberty which forced him on, and sent the armies and fleets of Great Britain, France, and Sardinia, with no adequate cause of immediate quarrel to the shores of the Black Sea and the Baltic. It is no exaggeration to say that if the Crimean War had never been fought the two subsequent decades of the century would not have seen the formation of a United Italy and a United Germany and all the consequences."

Here is a lesson worth a moment's consideration. It points a moral; two, indeed. The Crimean War was popular; but years after Lord Granville believed it to have been a great misfortune. Russia threatened western civilization; Russia was a military autocracy with half-mystical claims; she was also a danger to individual and political liberty. If the war had not been fought there would have been no United Germany, with all its power; *that* military autocracy with more than half-mystical claims might never have been strong enough to fight the French in 1870. So, we smash one Power which threatens individual and political liberty so that one far worse may some day arm with the intention of smashing us. But Holy Places must be preserved, and there is no better way than using gunpowder and bayonets; just to show a Christian nation's religious feelings are not to be outraged with impunity. The Crimean War cost Great Britain some 25,000 lives, and fifty millions in money; and the balance of power and the position of neutrals received many rude shocks during the progress of that disastrous campaign. The treaty made in Paris in 1856 was only fifteen years old when it was cancelled. Anyway, Russia was properly thrashed, and, for a few years, the citizens of the western democracies slept soundly, their dreams never haunted by the nightmare of a Slav autocracy threatening their individual and political liberties.

Not all diplomatists have been as frank as Lord Granville. In his letters he gives us a glimpse behind the scenes:

"The siege of Sevastopol has hitherto been a failure.

We have generals whom we do not trust, and whom we do not know how to replace. We have an Ambassador at Constantinople, an able man, a cat whom no one cares to bell, whom some think a principal cause of the war, others the cause of some of the calamities which have attended the conduct of the war; and whom we know to have thwarted or neglected many of the objects of his Government. The French generals seem worse than ours; the troops before Sevastopol inferior to ours, if not to the Russians."

That was written to the Duke of Argyll during the progress of the war. It would be interesting to know what the Government at the time told the country about the business. Another passage from the same letter contains a sentiment worth noting:

"In the meanwhile the deaths of brave men and distinguished officers, falling in affairs which have absolutely no results, press upon us the duty of considering whether it is absolutely necessary to continue the war."

Lord Granville might have gone further and said, "No matter what the result, nothing of any practical value to mankind will be gained." He might also have said, "In a few years the Russian and the Turk will be at each other's throats, and even Britain, to say nothing of France, will stand aside and let them tear each other to pieces."

The Treaty of Paris gave the god of battles little rest. The period from Victoria's accession to the date of the Repeal of the Corn Laws was replete with wars; and scores of peoples, scattered nearly all over the earth, engaged the attention of the martial deity. A complete list of the wars and revolutions of that period would occupy too much space; but to mention some of the localities,— to indicate how

widespread the area was over which the god had to watch the strife,— may serve a useful purpose. There was a revolution in Canada; Chartist disturbances at home; war in Afghanistan; tumults in Vienna, Berlin, and Rome: there were wars in India, Burma, Egypt, Turkey, and China; to say nothing of the risings in Ireland and South Wales. France, of course, had a revolution. 1848 was a very busy year for the god of battles. Nietzsche was not to blame for any of those wars. Indeed, the fundamental idea of *Thus Spake Zarathustra* did not come to him until 1881. So that work was not accountable even for the Franco-German War of 1870. And no British editor will assert that Treitschke was a popular author before he went to Leipzig. What then could have been the cause of all the disturbances? It must have been either Goethe or Jean Paul, or, mayhap, Tieck. There were men in Britain who might have said it was our fault for spreading bibles about the globe, and letting the unsophisticated read the 144th Psalm. Anyway, treaties and diplomatists were not successful in so much as keeping the peace of Burma, let alone the peace of Europe.

It must not be inferred, however, that every man in Britain during the first two decades of Victoria's reign was war-mad. There were some men who spoke strongly against armaments. For instance, Sir Robert Peel, in the House of Commons, in 1841, said:

"Is not the time come when the powerful countries of Europe should reduce their armaments which they have so sedulously raised? Is not the time come when they should

be prepared to declare that there is no use in such overgrown establishments? The true interest of Europe is to come to some common accord, so as to enable every country to reduce those military armaments, which belong to a state of war rather than of peace. I do wish that the councils of every country (or the public voice and mind, if the council did not) would willingly propagate such a doctrine."

A brave statement that, in the days when Palmerston and Thiers influenced the military establishments of Britain and France; before the Entente Cordiale was taken as a step towards the goal of European peace. Our western ally of to-day was then in a position to fill the mind of the Duke of Wellington with awe. He wrote, "excepting immediately under the fire of Dover Castle, there is not a spot on the coast, from the North Foreland to Selsey Bill, on which infantry might not be thrown on shore at any time of tide with any wind and in any weather." Seven years after the Duke's awful warning, Britain found France fighting side by side with her in the Crimea. Diplomacy brings together strange bedfellows.

After Russia was soundly thrashed by the Allies, peace did not even bring a reduction of military expenditure. In 1857 we sent military expeditions to China and Persia, at a time when British methods of teaching Hindoo princes how to govern were causing grave unrest in India. Then Disraeli was moved to say, "When a time of peace consists of preparations for war, of fitting out expeditions, of sending fleets to different quarters of the globe, then I am obliged to consider whether the war taxation is not required for circumstances and objects far different from those which a time of peace justi-

fies and requires." Many of the leading men then in the House of Commons believed that the best way to keep the peace was to curtail expenditure on armaments. Whatever may be said of the futility of that notion, it cannot now be claimed, by those who support the contrary view (namely, that the best way to keep the peace is to prepare for war), that large armies and powerful navies are factors which make for international harmony. There were "Little Navy" men in those days. Gladstone, for instance, resolutely opposed Palmerston's scheme to expend £11,000,000 on the defence of arsenals and dockyards. That was in the summer of 1860, when Herbert was at the War Office, and scared so many patriots by saying he was convinced that a great calamity was impending in the shape of war with France. Three years earlier the French Emperor had offered to facilitate the passage of troops through France to reinforce our regiments in India. The Cabinet, the House, and the country, were, nevertheless, in a state of panic, and Palmerston carried the day. Millions were spent fortifying our coasts against a French invasion, and the taxpayers, no doubt, felt secure behind the fortifications that saved them from Herbert's impending calamity. But to their sorrow, the taxpayers learned, in a very few years, that their millions had been thrown away. At that time of panic Gladstone said:

"We have no adequate idea of the predisposing power which an immense series of measures of preparations for war on our part has in actually begetting war. They familiarize ideas which lose their horrors, they light an inward flame of excitement of which, when it is habitually fed, we lose the consciousness."

The change from wooden to iron vessels two years after the panic revealed the madness of the wasters who had squandered the millions in 1860. From panic to negotiation within one year was quick shifting for any nation; still, Disraeli, in 1861, suggested a compact should be made with the French Government to limit naval expenditure. He said:

"What is the use of diplomacy, what is the use of Governments, what is the use of cordial understandings, if such things can take place?"

Cobden at that time used all his intelligence and strength to make the Government and the people see the danger of the nations piling up enormous armaments. His view of the question is worth remembering:

"A remedy for the evil can only be found in a more frank understanding between the two Governments. If they will discard the old and utterly futile theory of secrecy — a theory on which an individual manufacturer or merchant no longer founds his hopes of successful competition with a foreign rival — they may be enabled, by the timely exchange of explanations and assurances, to prevent what ought to be restricted to mere experimental trials from growing into formidable preparations for war. But the greatest evil connected with these rival armaments is that they destroy the strongest motives for peace. When two great neighbouring nations find themselves subjected to a war expenditure, without the compensation of its usual excitements and honours, the danger to be apprehended is that if an accident should occur to inflame their hostile passions — and we know how certain these accidents are at intervals to arise — their latent sense of suffering and injury may reconcile them to a rupture, as the only eventual escape from an otherwise perpetual war taxation in a time of peace."

Well might Disraeli ask what is the use of diplomacy. But "discard the old and utterly futile theory of secrecy," and what becomes of nine-tenths of the work of the Foreign Office? Besides, parasites take good care of their departments, and as they have benefited from the system, they consider it their duty to pass it on with all its privileges unimpaired to future parasites, as if it were a vested interest. Palmerston would have none of Cobden's Utopian proposals,— not he,— and straightway he set out to keep the country in a state of panic.

Diplomatists kept the god of battles busy through the years extending from the Crimean War along to 1864, the year before Palmerston passed away to that realm where the "jingo does not panic and bingo has no sale." Just about that period Prussia set to work to put her house in order. British statesmen failed to detect new movements which would mean great things in European history, but Palmerston was not the man to estimate the value of those plans and tendencies. And to-day, now that so many writers are looking to find the beginnings of this Germany we are warring against, few understand the influences that were at work about the year 1860, to which the extraordinary changes which took place might very well be attributed. The rise of Bismarck cannot be accredited to the teachings of Sybel and Treitschke, as some people imagine. Nor were the German people stimulated by their works. It may, however, be safely suggested that the vast majority of the Germans of that time read more books and pamphlets of Ferdinand Lassalle than those of any other four or five authors. Treitschke was read then no more than Bergson is read in Eng-

land now. The Germany we are trying to understand in this year 1915, is the product of two men of extraordinary powers who met in the plastic time, and impressed their strong personalities on a people of great capacity. Ferdinand Lassalle and Bismarck were the men, and the Germany that is puzzling many newspaper historians owes no more to the latter than it does to the former. George Brandes touches this idea in his work on Lassalle:

"One event during the nineteenth century has provoked the greatest surprise and astonishment in Europe. Unsuccessful attempts at its explanation have been, and are still, offered by the different European nationalities. This event is the process by which the Germany of Hegel was transformed to the Germany of Bismarck. Some theorists speak as if the old German stock had suddenly died out, and a new race had sprung up without roots; others, as if the old stock had been destroyed or ennobled by an infusion of Wendish-Slavonic blood. To some, modern Germany is enigmatic as the Iron Mask. The face of the philosopher and poet was the real countenance, and this has now been hidden by Prussian domination, as the mask concealed the identity of the unhappy prisoner. Others, again, regard the old and pleasant countenance of romance as the mask, hypocritically hiding the real features, which have now become visible. These views are alike injudicious, and are based in either case upon ignorance of the course of development which modern Germany has pursued. If this development is studied in literature, it will be seen how, step by step, the ideas, the methods of action, and the views of life pursued and entertained by the newer generation have developed organically from those of the past age. The gulf which divides the Germany of Hegel from the Germany of Bismarck will gradually be filled before our eyes. The faces upon either side of this gulf will appear as related by similarity of feature; while certain interesting and strongly marked

countenances which stand out boldly against the background of history will of themselves typify the process of transition and amalgamation which has fused the intellectual individualities of two generations. Of these special features hardly any is more interesting or more clearly cut than the figure of Ferdinand Lassalle. ` He was born on April 11th, 1825, and died of a wound received in a duel on August 21st, 1864. He was a distinguished pupil of Hegel, and was spoken of in his time as Bismarck's tutor, and not unreasonably; for even though he cannot be shown to have influenced Bismarck directly, yet, if we examine the points which decided both the foreign and domestic policy of the great statesman, we shall find that this policy precisely realized the programme propounded by the philosophical agitator."

How any responsible student of the history of Germany can pretend to describe her growth during the middle third of the last century, without taking account of the influence and genius of Lassalle, is incomprehensible. The same confusion exists to-day in the minds of the critics of German policy that existed over fifty years ago in the Fatherland, as to Lassalle's interpretation of Might and Right. Then the common notion was that Lassalle put might in the place of right. When he said in his lecture in Berlin in 1862, " Constitutional questions are, therefore, in the first instance, not questions of right, but questions of might," he stated the case of every so-called civilized nation, not Germany only, but Britain, France, and Belgium. He said, " The actual constitution of a country has its existence only in the actual conditions of force which exist in the country." No Britisher should now deny that ugly truth. But Lassalle was not stating what should be; he was presenting the case as it then stood in Germany and in other nations. True, the press at the time inter-

preted the lecture as a declaration that might was right. Lassalle in a pamphlet replied to the obvious misunderstanding, and said, "If I had created the world I should very probably have made an exception at this point in favour of the wishes of the *Volkszeitung* and of Count Schwerin, and have arranged that right should precede might. Such an arrangement would be quite in harmony with my own ethical standpoint and desires. Unfortunately, however, I have not been entrusted with the creation of the world, and must therefore decline any responsibility, any praise or blame, for the nature of existing arrangements."

Certainly, the first law of every "civilized" nation is force.

But we return to the immediate subject, however fascinating the digression may be to one whose only amusement in these terrible days is the nonsense babbled and scribbled by statesmen and journalists on German philosophers. The next exhibition of might preceding right was another utterly discreditable affair for British diplomacy. It took place in Eastern Europe, concerning Poland. What half a century can do for European nations, in changing and shifting thrones and boundaries, cannot be better illustrated than by presenting a simple record of events since 1862. Lord Edmund Fitzmaurice in his *Life of Lord Granville,* adorns the tale from which the public of to-day might draw many morals. Writing about the beginning of this century, Fitzmaurice said:

"Poland was then, as it still is, the hinge on which Prussian foreign policy turns. Ever since the first partition to avoid a conflict with Russia has been the policy of the Prus-

sian Foreign Office and the inherited tradition of her Royal Family. The Minister whom William I had just called to his councils, already contemplating that he might shortly have to open a new and perilous chapter of German and European history, which might bring him into collision with Austria and France, was determined under no circumstances whatever to risk a struggle with Russia. He, on the contrary, intended to obtain a solid guarantee of her future good-will, with an eye to coming events. To stand rigidly aloof from European intervention in the affairs of Poland was the obvious method to gain his end, especially as this policy would have the additional advantage of separating Russia from France should France join in the proposed intervention."

Britain and France sympathized with the Polish insurrectionists, but diplomatic intervention without the support of Austria or Prussia seemed to Lord Granville an act of madness. The Queen was alarmed and feared a rupture with Russia. The King of the Belgians wrote to the Queen a letter which is of great significance at present when Britain is spending millions and sacrificing thousands of lives in "upholding" the integrity and independence of Belgium. It seems incredible that the King of a small, weak power could write in such terms of an ancient kingdom that had suffered more terribly from the aggression of great powers than any country in the world. And it should be remembered that Belgium then owed its political existence to the Treaty of 1839. The King said:

"About Poland the English Cabinet must be prudent. . . . It would be impossible for the Emperor Alexander to give up these provinces, which, one must say, are prosperous, and have been now Russian for a long period. Their ex-

istence will be improved, as truly much has been already done in that way. But the Russians as a nation will never and can never submit to give them up. To carry on a war for that purpose, would for England be a fool's play. If a Poland, as the Garibaldians wish it could be restored, it would be in close alliance with France; and Prussia, particularly between the French on the Rhine and a French province on the Vistula, could not exist. It would be completely nullified. Austria would also get such a dangerous set of people near Hungary, that it would find itself in the same position. England has a vital interest, for its own security, that those two Powers should continue to maintain their existence. . . ."

Poor Poland! Not much sympathy then for your notions of independence. But what a strange thing is diplomacy! After all, continuity of foreign policy is merely a party shibboleth, and ambassadorial labours are vain. Prussia and Austria were the bulwarks of British and Belgian foreign policy of that day, and France was the menace to the peace of Europe. The British Cabinet did not then go out of its way to do much for a small nationality, and it was content to give merely platonic advice to Russia. Fitzmaurice said, " With the result that at the end of the diplomatic campaign Russia had become bound by ties of gratitude to Prussia for having refused to take part in it, while the previous good understanding between France and Russia was shattered. The remnants of good feeling between France and England were also still further reduced. . . . The net result was that both Great Britain and France were felt to have lost heavily in public estimation."

Then followed all the squalid business of Schles-

wig-Holstein and Denmark. Any one deeply imbued with the alleged gallantry of diplomatic Britain guarding the interests of small states and preserving "scraps of paper," might read with profit the history of our share in those transactions. In looking back it is amazing to see just where we stood in relation to France. Writing of the Frankfurt Congress, Lord Granville said to Lord Palmerston:

"No doubt anything tending to German Unity would be disagreeable to France, but would not give France any just pretence for attacking Belgium or Prussia, and if unity was in any military sense accomplished, it would make French aggression towards the Rhine more difficult."

There, in that Danish brawl, again the question of the integrity of a kingdom (which had been guaranteed by the Powers in a treaty in 1852) nearly set Europe in a blaze. The Germans resented the action of the Powers and now sought an opportunity of adding to their area the two Elbe Duchies. The squabble gave all the diplomatists a grand chance of pushing ulterior affairs affecting their states. It was, indeed, an orgy in which the mildest game was "beggar my neighbour," and the most modest one "strip Jack naked." The Jingoes in England were elated at the prospect of a war with Germany. Palmerston had high hopes; the situation was one he gloried in. There is nothing like a "scrap of paper" for bringing nations at each other's throats, whether it be to keep the scrap whole or to tear it to shreds. The temperature of Britain was raised to fever heat at the force thrown by two great Powers on little Denmark. Ashley says: "It was suggested that France and Great Britain should offer their media-

tion on the basis of the integrity of the Danish monarchy and the engagements of 1851–2; and that, if such mediation were refused by Austria and Prussia, England should despatch a squadron to Copenhagen, and France an army corps to the Rhenish frontier of Prussia." Palmerston talked big and did little. He said: "If any violent attempt was made to overthrow the rights and to interfere with the independence of Denmark, those who made the attempt would find in the result that it would not be Denmark alone with which they would have to contend." Ignorance of German feeling and ambition was just as dense then as it is now, and the ignorance was the cause of many silly misunderstandings. Apart from the national question of Denmark, some people said the Schleswig-Holstein affair arose because commercial bills in the Duchies were drawn upon Hamburg and not upon Copenhagen! A letter from the Queen to Lord Granville is instructive as to the way monarchs in those days regarded "scraps of paper":

"The Emperor (French) and M. Drouyn de l'Huys say 'We wish to maintain the treaty, but if the alternative is maintaining it or a conflagration in Europe, we prefer to modify or cancel it, rather than a conflagration.' . . . We have done too much, been too active, and done ourselves no good. We are, alas! detested in Germany."

The Queen fought hard for peace against the leaders of the Opposition and some of her chief Ministers. It was, however, Lord Granville whose wisdom and tact ultimately saved the country from a disastrous war. In another letter the Queen said:

"The only chance of preserving peace for Europe is by

not assisting Denmark, who has brought this entirely upon herself, and who, the Queen believes, would now even resist fulfilling her promises! Denmark is after all of less vital importance than the peace of Europe, and it would be madness to set the whole Continent on fire for the imaginary advantages of maintaining the integrity of Denmark. Lord Palmerston and the Emperor Nicholas are the cause of all the present trouble by framing that wretched Treaty of 1852."

What strange ideas Victoria had of treaties and people's rights. What would have happened had she been on the throne last year? She might have asked what on earth the people of this generation have to do with a treaty signed in 1839, and why the British nation should be committed to a European conflagration because their grandfather's Foreign Secretaries agreed to a diplomatic deal of which the people knew little and cared less. She might have said, " that Lord Palmerston was the cause of all the present trouble by framing the wretched Treaties of 1831–9 which abrogated the Treaty of Vienna." " Scraps of paper " were not hallowed in those days, and even Queens preferred peace to the strict observance of treaties made by men who scarcely ever consulted the people. Victoria's stand against Palmerston and Russell in 1864 was a notable performance for a constitutional monarch. The following on sacred duties and convictions is refreshing:

" The Queen thanks Lord Granville for his reassuring letter. She can only repeat that she is so thoroughly convinced of the awful danger and recklessness of our stirring up France and Russia to go to war, that she would be prepared to make a stand upon it, should it even cause the resignation of Lord Russell. . . . There are duties and con-

victions so sacred and so strong that they outweigh all other considerations. . . . We must not commit a second time the grievous fault of signing away other people's rights and of handing over people themselves to a Sovereign to whom they owe no allegiance."

Palmerston's unauthorized threat that he would regard it "as an affront and insult to England," and that he "would not stand such a thing" if an Austrian squadron were to pass along the English coasts, was provocative if it were nothing else. The Cabinet did not endorse the language of the fire-eating statesman, and though the fate of Britain for a long time trembled on the brink of war, the saner folk rallied to the side of the Queen. She wrote at midnight, June 23rd, 1864, to Lord Granville:

"What the Queen is so anxious for is that the true, real, and great interests of the country should be considered, and the enormous danger of allying ourselves with France, who would drag us into a war with Italy and on the Rhine and set all Europe in a blaze; which is so far more important than the very foolish excitement which the Queen is sure will cool down the moment war seems likely to result from it. . . . The Treaty of 1852 must be given up."

And given up it was; utterly destroyed by the wolves that feasted on the menu at Prague. Denmark was stripped stark of Lauenburg, Holstein and the southern part of Schleswig, and the Danish portion of that Duchy. Prussia won an all-round victory, leaving no unscrupulous military, diplomatic, or imperial method out of the deal. Our prestige and honour came out of all the miserable business somewhat tousled; but the people were spared the cost of an unnecessary war. Whether they regretted the

loss of prestige and honour suffered by her diplomatists will never be known; for there is no way of estimating the value of diplomatic honour in a game that is carried on without the participation of the people. In the House of Commons, Disraeli moved the following motion:

"To express to Her Majesty our great regret that while the course pursued by the Government had failed to maintain their avowed policy of upholding the independence and integrity of Denmark, it has lowered the just influence of this country in the councils of Europe and thereby diminished the securities for peace."

It was in 1864 that John Bright had something to say about the balance of power, which had been so many times upset since Napoleon was sent to St. Helena. Speaking in Birmingham, Bright said:

"The theory of the balance of power is pretty nearly dead and buried. You cannot comprehend at a thought what is meant by the balance of power. If the record could be brought before you — but it is not possible for the eye of humanity to scan the scroll upon which are recorded the sufferings which the balance of power has entailed upon this country. It rises up before me when I think of it as a ghastly phantom which during one hundred and seventy years, whilst it has been worshipped in this country, has loaded the nation with debt and taxes, has sacrificed the lives of hundreds of thousands of Englishmen, has desolated the homes of millions of families, and has left us, as the great result of the profligate expenditure it has caused, a doubled peerage at one end of the social scale, and far more than a doubled pauperism at the other. I am very glad to be here to-night, amongst other things, to be able to say that we may rejoice that this foul idol — fouler than any heathen tribe ever worshipped — has at last been thrown

down, and that there is one superstition less which has its hold on the minds of English statesmen and of the English people."

Bright perhaps regretted that so much labour was wasted on the schemes of diplomatists while the rights of individuals were neglected at home. Education, the franchise, and religious equality had not much chance in Parliament while foreign affairs occupied the attention of statesmen. Any trouble abroad about some succession, or treaty, or duchy, was of far greater importance than the economic, political, or religious rights of the people. Whether it is moral for one generation to impose the obligations of war on the next has not yet been decided by politicians — much less diplomatists — nor has it yet occurred to any statesman to draw a sharp line of differentiation between those affairs that directly affect the true interests of the people, and the terrible traffickings which are done in the name of the people without their consent. In 1864 the agricultural labourer in Britain was a chattel-slave, and millions of the workers in the towns were politically little better off. Instead of a vote, a rifle; instead of an acre of "their native land," a place in a foreign trench; instead of the full value of his product, a ticket for soup; these were the net returns for worshipping the "foul idol." And there were not less cant and hypocrisy talked in the days of Palmerston than are talked now in the days of Sir Edward Grey.

The foul idol was not, however, so easily got rid of as Bright imagined. If the balance of power was thrown down in 1864, it did not take diplomatists long to set up something just as foul in its place. What do terms matter? The cost is just the same,

whether it be balance of power, Triple Alliance, Entente Cordiale, known agreements, secret agreements, or "conversations between military and naval experts." The result is the same; the nation loaded with debt and taxation; hundreds of thousands of lives are sacrificed; homes desolated; and there stalks a pauperism which brings honour and glory to the flag that floats over the free. The prestige of a landless people is something the war-poets might immortalize in song, and the patriotism of a double peerage be exalted in new epics that might rival Byron's "Age of Bronze." The gospel of learning to die for one's country was satirical enough in 1864; — certainly millions had little chance of living decently in it,—

> "The 'good old times'— all times when old are good —
> Are gone; the present might be if they would;
> Great things have been, and are, and greater still
> Want little of mere mortals than their will:
> A wider space, a greener field is given
> To those who play their 'tricks before high heaven.'
> I know not if the angels weep, but men
> Have wept enough — for what? — to weep again!"

Did Bright think the power to make war passed with the burial of the balance of power? Sanguine man, he little knew what a decade of diplomacy would bring forth. Abyssinia, the Austro-Prussian War, and the Franco-German Wars had to come. The inevitable in each case had to happen! Soon after Bright's speech, the god of battles was as busy as ever. Meanwhile legislators quarrelled like Kilkenny cats as to whether the time was ripe for the people to have free education, more votes, and fewer

religious animosities. Britain entered upon the three last decades of the nineteenth century with high hopes of that enlightenment which would bring wisdom to electors, and enable them to judge which party was politically best to carry on the stupendous work of foreign affairs. But with all these hopes of raising an educated electorate, not yet have the people learned that *"Wisdom is better than weapons of war: but one sinner destroyeth much good."*

CHAPTER III

1870

"HEAVY banks of cloud with occasional breaks of brighter sky over Europe; and all the plot, intrigue, conspiracy, and subterranean scheming, that had been incessant ever since the Crimean War disturbed the old European system, and Cavour first began the recasting of the map, was but the repulsive and dangerous symptom of a dire conflict in the depths of international politics. The Mexican adventure, and the tragedy of Maximilian's death at Queretaro, had thrown a black shadow over the iridescent and rotten fabric of Napoleon's power. Prussian victory over Austria at Sadowa had startled Europe like a thunderclap. The reactionary movement within the Catholic fold, as disclosed in the Vatican council, kindled many hopes among the French clericals, and these hopes inspired a lively antagonism to protestant Prussia in the breast of the Spanish-born Empress of the French. Prussia in 1866 had humiliated one great Catholic power when she defeated the Austrian monarchy on the battlefields of Bohemia. Was she to overthrow also the power that kept the Pope upon his temporal throne in Rome? All this, however, was no more than the fringe, though one of the hardest things in history is to be sure where substance begins and fringe ends. The cardinal fact for France and for Europe was German unity. Ever since the Danish conflict, as Bismarck afterwards told the British Government, the French Emperor strove to bring Prussia to join him in plans for their common aggrandizement. The unity of Germany meant, besides all else, a vast extension of the area from which the material of military strength was to be drawn; and this meant the relative depression of

the power of French arms. Here was the substantial fact, feeding the flame of national pride with solid fuel. The German confederation of the Congress of Vienna was a skilful invention of Metternich's, so devised as to be inert for offence, but extremely efficient against French aggression. A German confederation under the powerful and energetic leadership of Prussia gave France a very different neighbour."

— Morley, *Life of Gladstone.*

When the Duc de Gramont, the French Minister for Foreign Affairs, said in 1870 that France would not tolerate a Hohenzollern prince on the Spanish throne, the balance of power theory was suddenly revived and diplomatists saw the prospect of a boom in their business. There had been a lull at the Foreign Office, and armaments were somewhat depressed. Save for the murder of some British subjects by brigands in Greece the horizon was fairly clear of war-clouds. But there was nothing quite like the succession to the Spanish throne for raising animosities in the best regulated royal families. Actual military proceedings seemed to hang fire for some time, and Bismarck and Moltke became depressed. The latter saw no advantage to the Germans in deferring the outbreak of hostilities. A telegram from the King of Prussia, recording a conversation he had had with Benedetti, the French ambassador, at Ems, reached Berlin in time to enliven an otherwise dull dinner for the Fafner and Fasolt of the modern Valhalla. The story is an old one. Bismarck set to work to make the telegram read as it suited his aim. It was altered and published so that the new version should stir the laggard factions into strife. After Bismarck's editing, Moltke cried,

"Now it has a different ring; it sounded before like a parley; now it is like the flourish in answer to a challenge." Soon after the garbled telegram was known to the world, the German artisan was packing up for Paris, and his outraged brother in France was labelling his luggage for Berlin. Royal brawls touch the shrine on the hearth of every labourer's cottage in Christendom, and it must not be expected that any loyal labourer will sit down under the insult of any nation, not his own, attempting to interfere with the succession of any prince to a throne. The people of Britain, too, were deeply agitated. Soon the question of our neutrality disturbed the minds of statesmen and men in the street. Bismarck said:

"Great Britain should have forbidden France to enter on war. She was in a position to do so, and her interests and those of Europe demand it of her. He observed that if Germany should be victorious, of which he had every confidence, the balance of power in Europe would be preserved; but if France should unfortunately obtain the upper hand, she would be mistress of Europe and impose her law on other states. England could prevent this by her action now. . . ."

The French had hoped Britain would support their claim to interfere with the Hohenzollern intentions. Germany criticised our lapse from strict neutrality, because arms, and coals, and horses had been exported to France. Each belligerent looked for benevolent neutrality from Great Britain, but political opinion on the question was divided. The Queen, however, entered the lists and showed a better understanding of what strict neutrality meant than many statesmen did. She wrote to Lord Granville:

"The Queen would much regret that any misunderstanding should embitter the feelings between us and Germany, and would be glad to know if you think it would be possible to make any public declaration that would convince the German people that our object is to preserve a strict neutrality, and not in any way to favour France, but to treat both nations equally."

It is pretty reading at this time, how Belgium stood as a neutral zone in 1870. To one whose heart is filled with loathing of the hellish business that has laid that busy country waste and crippled its brave population, nothing but bitter regret for the misdeeds of diplomatists is left, and a profound horror of the popular ignorance of the history of treaties.

The Treaty of 1839 was in existence in 1870; how then did Britain act in relation to it? What influence did she exert to keep Belgium free of bloodshed and all the woe she suffers to-day? What great mind was then at work? Is it too much to say that all the difference lies in the fact that Britain had a Granville then, and now she has a Grey? Our hands were free in 1870! and in face of the danger that either Germany or France might be tempted to gain military or territorial advantage in Belgium or Luxembourg, we were able to avoid dragging Britain into a European war.

When the *Times* published the text of the draft treaty which Benedetti submitted to Bismarck in 1866, the country was roused to a high pitch of Jingo fever. According to that document, in case the Emperor of the French should be led by circumstances to send his troops to enter Belgium or to conquer it, it was laid down that the King of Prussia

should "grant armed aid to France," and support her "with all his forces, military and naval, in the face of and against every other power which should in this eventuality declare war." And that was the conspiracy of the agents of two of the Powers which signed the Treaty of 1839! France evidently in 1866 did not place as much reliance on its sacred provisions as her Ministers do to-day. Some treaties are like great lies, in this respect: the older they grow the more revered they become. When that notorious political adventurer, Napoleon III, wrote to the Duc de Gramont explaining what to his recollection occurred when the conspirators met in 1866, he said:

"Bismarck said to Prince Napoleon in Berlin, 'You seek an impossible thing. You would take the provinces of the Rhine which are German, and wish to remain as they are. Why do you not annex Belgium, where a people exists of the same origin and the same language? I have already said this to the Emperor; if he agrees with these views we will help him to take Belgium. As for me, if I were master, and if I were not troubled with the King's obstinacy, this would be soon done.'"

Now Britain is fighting shoulder to shoulder with France because Germany has violated the Treaty of 1839! Morley in his *Life of Gladstone* describes the situation as it affected Britain:

"There were members of the Cabinet who doubted the expediency of England taking any action. The real position of affairs, they argued, was not altered: the draft treaty only disclosed what everybody believed before, namely, that France sought compensation for Prussian aggrandizement, as she had secured it for Italian aggrandizement by taking

Savoy and Nice. That Prussia would not object, provided the compensation were not at the expense of people who spoke German, had all come out at the time of the Luxembourg affair. If France and Prussia agreed, how could we help Belgium, unless indeed Europe joined? But then what chance was there of Russia and Austria joining against France and Prussia for the sake of Belgium, in which neither of them had any direct interest? At the same time ministers knew that the public in England expected them to do something, though a vote for men and money would probably suffice. The Cabinet, however, advanced a step beyond a parliamentary vote. On July 30th they met and took a decision to which Mr. Gladstone then and always after attached high importance. England proposed a treaty with Prussia and France, providing that if the armies of either violated the neutrality of Belgium, Great Britain would co-operate with the other for its defence, but without engaging to take part in the general operations of the war. The treaty was to hold good for twelve months after the conclusion of the war. Bismarck at once came into the engagement. France loitered a little, but after the battle of Worth made no more difficulty, and the instrument was signed on August 9th."

It is a nice point in international law how far Austria and Russia lent their sanction to the making of the Treaties of 1870. Anyway, the treaties signed by Britain, France and Germany were to continue for the period of the war and for a year after the termination of hostilities. It was the publication of the draft treaty of 1866 that threw upon the Government the necessity of "either doing something fresh to secure Belgium, or else of saying that under no circumstances would we take any step to secure her from absorption," so Mr. Gladstone said in laying the case before John Bright. In a later letter to Bright he said:

"You will, I am sure, give me credit for good faith when I say, especially on Lord Granville's part as on my own, who are most of all responsible, that we take this step in the interest of peace. . . . The recommendation set up in opposition to it generally is, that we should simply declare that we will defend the neutrality of Belgium by arms in case it should be attacked. Now the sole or single-handed defence of Belgium would be an enterprise which we incline to think Quixotic. . . . If the Belgian people desire, on their own account, to join France or any other country, I for one will be no party to taking up arms to prevent it."

He added that it would be a crime to stand aloof and see Belgium taken by another country to satisfy dynastic greed. Then Britain's position would have been intolerable had she not been perfectly free from European entanglements.

However, a new danger arose after the signing of the treaties. Austria was looking for an opportunity of getting even with Bismarck for the troubles of 1866. The Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs hoped to drag Italy into the row. Russia was likely to side with Germany. Napoleon thought Denmark might be persuaded to join the fray and get Schleswig back from Germany. The squabble which began with the Hohenzollern claim to the Spanish succession seemed likely to involve the whole of Europe. Then as now, the initial trouble was lost sight of in the myriad complications set up by former affrays. Of course, in all these intrigues diplomatists were looking after "the interests of the people." National "prestige" and "honour" were acclaimed by the proletariats in every capital of Europe. The imperial aspirations of France, so dear to the hearts of her revolutionists, ranked in ardour with the im-

perial desires of the small kingdoms and duchies of the German states, which were to lose their identity in the maw of Bismarck's scheme of confederation. The mixed populations of a " united " Austria spent sleepless nights thinking of their national " heritage," and Italy, with her people all of one mind, yearned for an opportunity of showing how highly she valued her " honour " by siding with Austria in the struggle. The success of Germany at the beginning of the war enabled Lord Granville to form a neutral league which kept the ring for the French and Germans. There is a fine passage in Fitzmaurice's *Life of Granville,* which bears directly on the wisdom of his action in forming the league of neutrals. It is strikingly appropriate here; besides, it bears repetition because it so graphically describes the position of Russia in European affairs forty years ago:

" It was argued in France that had Lord Granville pursued an opposite policy to that adopted, and had the Queen at his advice placed herself at the head of a militant league — so easy are such combinations on paper — Denmark, Italy, Austria, and Turkey would, with Great Britain, have forced conditions upon Count Bismarck, and been ready to bring Russia to a standstill in the event of the Czar coming to the rescue of the King of Prussia. According to these calculations not only would France then have been saved, but Great Britain herself would have escaped the humiliation of having subsequently to consent to the abrogation of the clauses of the Treaty of Paris relating to the neutralization of the Black Sea. If Lord Granville, such was the contention, had imposed an armed mediation on the combatants, and had practically dictated terms of peace to Germany, Great Britain and France could afterwards have joined hands against Russia, and the clauses of the Treaty of 1856 regarding the Black Sea would have been main-

tained in their integrity. In refusing so to act, Lord Granville, according to these critics, showed an absolute lack of foresight, and missed an obvious opportunity in the month of September, 1870. The argument, however, overlooks the main factor of the situation, the determination of Germany to refuse mediation, a determination plainly and openly declared. It also overlooks the fact, frequently forgotten by foreign writers when engaged in making a policy for Great Britain, that, in the famous words of Lord John Russell used in the debate on the case of Don Pacifico, the Foreign Secretary of this country is the Minister not of France, nor of Russia, nor of any other foreign country, but of Great Britain alone, and has to think first and foremost of her interests. The decision which Lord Granville had to take depended on the relative importance which as Foreign Minister he attached to the preservation of peace and to the maintenance of the Black Sea clauses. The former and not the latter was in Lord Granville's opinion the main object. It is certain that no intervention except an armed mediation could have produced any marked result, and an armed mediation would only have extended the area of disturbance. Nor can it even be assumed as a matter beyond doubt that a mediation in favour of France, even if successful, would necessarily have ended in the preservation of the Black Sea clauses, for an armed mediation would inevitably have thrown Germany into the arms of Russia even more completely than before the commencement of the war. It is idle now to speculate whether, under any circumstances, the clauses of the Black Sea Treaty could long have remained part of the public law of Europe; but what degree of sacrifice it would be wise for Great Britain to make in order to maintain them, if the other Powers would make no effort to do so, was a question which the British Government alone was competent to decide. On the assumption that the clauses were worth an effort to save, it is hardly possible to imagine any method more certain to have immediately led not only to their final loss, but to that

also of other and far more valuable provisions of the Treaties of 1856, than to have initiated at this date a gigantic struggle in which Germany, backed by Russia alone, would have been engaged in a hand-to-hand contest with the rest of Europe."

How national dispositions change under the guidance of diplomatists is one of the strangest things, outside the ultramontane forest where the lion will lie down with the lamb, that can be imagined. The fear then was the union of the arms of Germany and Russia. Then our Foreign Secretary was not the Minister of any country but our own. And a precept of the Foreign Office was that phrase which in our school-days we had to write in our copy-books one hundred times by way of penalty for some prank, "Mind your own affairs." Forty years back, our policy was a selfish one: our interests first. And it was good for Europe as a whole. Then, diplomatic humiliation was preferred to war; now we prefer a European cataclysm rather than diplomatic humiliation. In those days treaties were "scraps of paper," even when their dates were of that generation; now "scraps of paper" are holy writ, though their dates carry us back more than three score years and ten. Holy writ! Not all the religious bodies in this Christian land ever paid to holy writ half the attention we have lately paid to the Treaty of 1839.

In the negotiations which followed, Thiers gave utterance to a prophetic statement when he spoke to Lord Granville of the apathy shown by Great Britain. He referred to Britain's loss of dignity and "the danger to her and all Europe of the immense preponderance of Germany: more immediately to Austria, which must lose her German provinces; for

there was nothing that North Germany, with a population of 60,000,000, could not do, acting as a machine, and led by such a man as Bismarck." Europe had a foretaste of Prussian militarism; of its arrogance, its vindictiveness, its cruelty. And now it would be well for Britain to learn that the same sharp line which divided the political party from the military party in those days, still marks the line of cleavage between the parties to-day. While journalists and statesmen are lumping together indiscriminately everything which is of German origin, and blasting the whole life and thought of that people with one charge, it should be remembered that, after the war, we shall have a German Minister at the Court of St. James, and at Berlin there will be a British ambassador. Diplomatic relations are not broken off forever, no, no matter what the newspapers say.

Even Thiers, after a visit in 1870 to the Prussian headquarters, found, so Lord Lyons wrote, "that there was a political party and a military party, each clearly defined. The political party, with which Count Bismarck himself in a great measure agreed was desirous of bringing the war to an end by concluding peace on comparatively moderate terms. The military party held that the glory of the Prussian arms and the future security of Germany demanded that the rights of war should be pushed to the uttermost, and that France should be laid waste, ruined, and humiliated to such a degree, as to render it impossible for her to wage war again with Germany for very many years." Instead of doing everything now to embitter the best minds in Germany, how much better it would be to seek out the remnant of

the political party, and sow the seeds of the peace that some day must be consummated, and spread the spirit of amity that must rise again in the two peoples! It is difficult to do this so long as the god of battles is presiding over British interests, but the day may come when the people will forsake that brass deity and turn to the All-Father. France was sore in 1870, but France traded with Germany after the fighting was done.

Peace negotiations in 1870 had a tortuous and rather degraded road to travel. Bismarck said that Thiers, through a third party, proposed to make peace and cede Alsace and Lorraine in exchange for Belgium, by giving France to King Leopold, and that the Belgian King was most favourably disposed to the scheme. What schemes are now being hatched for grabbing territory, only diplomatists can say; but it is to be hoped that the Allies will not depart from the conditions laid down in the British House of Commons by the Prime Minister at the beginning of the war. We might look back to 1870 with some profit and remember what Gladstone had to say about the settlement:

"If the contingency happen, not very probable, of a sudden accommodation which shall include the throttling of Alsace and part of Lorraine, without any voice previously raised against it, it will in my opinion be a standing reproach to England. There is indeed the Russian plan of not recognizing that in which we have no part; but it is difficult to say what this comes to."

Then later he prophesied a bad time for Europe as a result of the settlement:

"I have an apprehension that this violent laceration and

transfer is to lead us from bad to worse, and to be the beginning of a new series of complications."

Our freedom from Continental engagements saved us from innumerable troubles in those days. The position Lord Granville took up with regard to strict neutrality could only have been maintained so long as Britain kept her hands quite free of entanglements and secret engagements. Neutrality is a word that has been bandied about since the beginning of this war, but it had another quite different meaning when Lord Granville was at the Foreign Office. The policy of to-day has been one of benevolent neutrality, and it has perhaps been one of the chief reasons why we were drawn into the tragedy. Lord Granville defined the difference between strict neutrality and benevolent neutrality most clearly:

"It seems hardly to admit of doubt that neutrality, when it once departs from strict neutrality, runs the risk of altering its essence, and that the moment a neutral allows his proceedings to be biassed by predilection for one of the two belligerents he ceases to be neutral. The idea, therefore, of a benevolent neutrality can mean little less than the extinction of neutrality."

According to this definition the policy of the Foreign Office of to-day is preposterous, and the despatches of the Foreign Secretary to our ambassadors at Paris and Berlin, asking the French and German Governments to declare their intentions towards Belgium, were mere diplomatic subterfuge and pretext, done to hoodwink the people and Parliament. Our position was vitiated by the entente and the secret agreement entered into in 1906, when conversations between French and British military and naval ex-

perts were permitted by the very Foreign Secretary that put on the mantle of strict neutrality at the end of July. Can any one now doubt that our proceedings were "biassed by predilection" when our Foreign Minister exchanged letters with M. Cambon in November, 1912, which committed Britain to the obligations of war? Were we or were we not biassed when our ambassador at Petersburg was informed about the orders given to the fleet on July 27th?

A neutral's hands must be free! — at no time since January, 1906, have our hands been free. Only a position of "splendid isolation" can leave a nation free to act in a strictly honourable way in affairs of this kind. There can be no impartiality where the policy of a country is fettered by secret understandings. The phrase "foreign friendships," used so often of late, is in itself an indictment; and, in connection with France, proves how absurd our position as a so-called neutral power was all through the negotiations since the murder of the Austrian archduke. What would Lord Granville have thought of our position as a "neutral" had he known of armament rings and touting diplomats? What would he have said of London newspapers encouraging their correspondents in foreign capitals to inflame Jingoes abroad, while the journals benefited from Russian money paid for supplements? No one can look through the report of Parliamentary Proceedings since 1906, and read the questions and replies regarding the Expeditionary Force without being impressed with the notion that we were committed up to the hilt to support France if she were attacked by a third Power. Neutrality! Neutrality was a term

to conjure with in Lord Granville's day; but since the policy of " foreign friendships " was inaugurated at the Foreign Office the term might just as well have been obliterated from the vocabulary of diplomatists.

As for the Treaty of 1839 which guaranteed the independence and neutrality of Belgium, its existence was never thought of by any one outside the Foreign Office since the close of the Franco-German War, until an excuse had to be found for our implication in this imbroglio. Anyway, no attempt was made to revive the treaties of August 9th, 1870. And for a very good reason; our understanding with France precluded the possibility of such a thing. The farce of asking France if she would observe the independence and neutrality of Belgium could only have been appreciated by Germany. On July 31st our fleet had nearly bottled up the German navy, and an invasion of the northern and western coasts of France was not probable. There was only one way the Germans could invade France, with whom she had no particular quarrel, and that was by violating the Treaty of 1839, and advancing her troops through Luxembourg and Belgium. No one knew that better than our Foreign Secretary when he sent his despatches to Paris and Berlin on July 31st. What is to be said of a foreign policy which aggravates a nation by hemming it in with secret understandings and plans of General Staffs, so that when it is attacked on its eastern frontier by a formidable foe (with whom we act in benevolent ways, and who with the other Powers is privy to the Belgian Treaty of 1839), and says to the aggravated country, " You must not use the only road left open for rapid movements against the ally of the nation on your eastern

frontier"; while all the time in secret agreement with the Power on the western frontier to lend armed support in the event of an attack? A foreign policy that binds together for obligations of war three Powers signatory of a treaty of neutrality against two Powers also signatory of the same treaty, and which places one of these latter in an invidious position as a belligerent, is not based upon the policy of neutrality laid down by Lord Granville.

But in the event of one of the Powers signatory of the Treaty of 1839 violating the neutrality and independence of Belgium, were we bound to help lay waste its territory in process of chastising the initial violator? Under the terms of the treaty, our obligations were not defined. There is no provision in it which necessitates Britain sending troops into Belgium to make war on any Power that should violate its territory. The diplomatists who drew up the treaty knew what they were doing when they left the question of obligation open. They had no intention of committing their respective Governments to the obligations of war. The only possible way Britain could have insisted on all the Powers signatory of the treaty observing its provisions was by maintaining a position of strict neutrality. This would have enabled her to say that she would act against any one or more of the Powers who should violate Belgian territory, and that British action would be limited to Belgium only. In the Treaty of 1870 the obligations of Britain were clearly defined:

"The Queen on her part declares that if during the said hostilities the armies of France should violate that neutrality (Belgian) she will be prepared to co-operate with his Prussian Majesty for the defence of the same in such man-

ner as may be mutually agreed upon, employing for that purpose her naval and military forces to insure its observance, and to maintain in conjunction with his Prussian Majesty, then and thereafter, the independence and neutrality of Belgium."

In the same treaty our liability was strictly limited, and the area of our operations in the case of action laid down:

"It is clearly understood that Her Majesty the Queen of the United Kingdom does not engage herself by this Treaty to take part in any of the general operations of the war now carried on between the North German Confederation and France, beyond the limits of Belgium."

These provisions revealed the necessity of dispensing with the Treaty of 1839, which was useless for all practical purposes when the danger of invasion presented itself to Belgium in the days when Lord Granville was in control of the Foreign Office. Military operations have so far shown that Britain has had something else to do than protect the neutrality of Belgium within the area of Belgium. She is at present engaged in doing the very thing she engaged with his Prussian Majesty not to do in 1870: that is, take part in any of the general operations of the war. Under the Treaty of 1870, Britain could not have landed a drummer-boy on French soil. Our actions on the Continent since the outbreak of hostilities have no connection of any kind with the provisions of the Treaty signed in 1870.

It is not easy to say how the Treaty of 1870 affected the position of Russia and Austria as signatories of the old treaty. Their interest was only concerned with that of 1839, and the fact that they were

not parties to the new treaties raised a debatable point as to the validity of the old one. All the signatories of a treaty must agree to any alteration of its provisions. Did Russia and Austria agree in 1870 to the making of the treaties of that year? Morley says, referring to the situation in 1870, "What chance was there of Russia and Austria joining against France and Prussia for the sake of Belgium, in which neither of them had any direct interest?" In 1830 Britain's plan of preventing Belgium from becoming a French province was no easy business, for it destroyed the triumph of 1814–5 in making Belgium part of the kingdom of Holland. Russia and Austria were lukewarm parties to the affair; and Prussia knew then she was only a party to a deal of Palmerston's to dish Talleyrand. Let us be ordinarily honest. Let us for Heaven's sake get away from the neurasthenic slosh and tosh of "violating treaties," and think of our history in connection with numberless "scraps of paper." Nobody in the long-run is going to be taken in by our sanctimoniousness, our smug lifting up of hands to heaven as though heaven were a colony of the British Empire. "Things and actions are what they are," said Bishop Butler, in a noble passage, "and the consequences of them will be what they will be. Why then should we desire to be deceived?"

The hoary method of war first and law after is being repeated in this present complication. When the question of the legal position of the five Powers with regard to the old treaty is thrashed out after the war, there will be a rush for precedents. A diplomatic war broke out in Europe when Russia announced to the Powers in 1870 that she considered

herself no longer bound by the provisions of the Treaty of 1856. Mr. Odo Russell, who was sent by Lord Granville on a mission to Bismarck, at the headquarters of the German army in France, sounded Lord Derby and Lord Russell before he left England, and gathered from Lord Russell that he did not believe that the Black Sea clauses could be permanent and that he favoured modification. Lord Derby said, "He would fight for the neutrality of Egypt, but not for the neutrality of the Black Sea." The actions of Lord Palmerston and his ministry were the cause of deep dissatisfaction in 1856, and Lord Granville was severely criticised for the part Britain took in 1870–1. It was said that he had tamely permitted Russia to flaunt her decision to disregard the Black Sea clauses in the face of all the Powers. Our diplomatic prestige suffered some humiliation on both occasions. In the Treaty of Paris, 1856, it was laid down that the annexed convention could not be annulled or modified without the assent of the Powers signatory of the Treaty. Russia's decision was therefore a violation of that provision. The point of consequence here, however, is the fact that a Conference met in London early in 1871 where the Powers, including Russia, signed an agreement to recognize,

> "that it is an essential principle of the law of nations, that no Power can liberate itself from the engagements of a treaty, nor modify the stipulations thereof, unless with the consent of the contracting Powers, by means of an amicable arrangement."

If this declaration of the London Conference which defined an essential principle of the law of na-

tions still holds good, what becomes of the Treaty of 1839? That Treaty did not define the obligations of the Powers which signed it. The Treaties of 1870 modified its provisions by defining strict obligations without the consent of Russia and Austria. Did the actions of Britain, France, and Prussia, in 1870, according to an essential principle of the law of nations, make the Treaty of 1839 null and void? Mr. Gladstone described the new treaties as more stringent measures for the protection of Belgian neutrality than the general guarantee of 1839. The only way the apologists of our foreign policy of to-day can defend our action in making the neutrality of Belgium, as laid down in the Treaty of 1839, the *casus belli,* is by isolating that treaty and exempting it from the law that affected the Treaty of Paris, and the Agreement arrived at by the Powers at the London Conference of 1871, when the Powers recognized that "no Power can liberate itself from the engagements of a treaty, nor modify the stipulations thereof, unless with the consent of the contracting Powers."

International lawyers have gone so far in defining our position under the old treaty as to say that we should have accepted the German guarantee of Belgian integrity and independence at the close of the war, though technically the spirit of the treaty were violated by Germany in despatching troops across the territory. Britain was not in any way empowered by the treaty to declare war against Germany because she asked Belgium for a free passage for her troops. Why were only Germany and France asked the question? Why were Austria and Russia ignored? Russia was every bit as much an ally of

Britain and France on July 31st as she is to-day. Is there a European law? Surely all history teaches us that with nations it is only a question of time when each in turn will say with Alexander I, "What do you suppose that all your parchments and your treaties signify to me?" Ashley says, "During the Crimean War we sent a remonstrance to Holland on her violation of neutrality in supplying arms to Russia, and then discovered that our own Ordnance Department had been ordering from the Dutch large quantities of gunpowder."

The sublime faith that nations have from time immemorial placed in the efficacy of treaties is one of the features of nineteenth century diplomacy. Consider the faith of the Belgian Government in the Treaty of 1839! On August 3rd, the Belgian Government decided not to appeal to the guarantee of the Powers; but within twenty-four hours the King of the Belgians telegraphed to King George to exert diplomatic intervention, and no reference was made in the telegram to the Treaty of 1839. Belgium knew from the beginning that in the event of a European war Germany must advance against France through Belgium. Yet on August 2nd our Foreign Secretary said the Cabinet had not decided whether the neutrality of Belgium should be made the *casus belli!* On August 1st our ambassador at Brussels was told by the Belgian Government that they were in a position to defend themselves against intrusion, though the relations between Belgium and her neighbours were excellent, and there was no reason to suspect their intentions! Nevertheless, Belgium was something of an armed camp at Easter, 1914. There is a discrepancy somewhere; for huge prepara-

tions for war seem unnecessary when a country has no reason to suspect the intentions of her neighbours, and her relations with them are excellent.

Belgium, however, thought it well to be prepared for all emergencies. No doubt her faith in European law needed armed support. We know now that for eighteen months at least the Belgian Government had been preparing for the day when Britain and France would be engaged together in a European war. Alone, Belgium was no match for Germany. Which Power then did she fear? Why should a neutral nation, with an abounding faith in the law of nations, pass, within five years, two laws to increase her military establishments? In January, 1910, she raised her war forces from 140,000 to 180,000, and in November, 1912, she raised her war army from 180,000 to 340,000. What is the good of diplomacy? What is the good of treaties, old or new, if distrust is to be the result of all efforts at neutralization and the making of friendships? There is nothing quite so preposterous in the annals of foreign affairs as the arming of Belgium, this neutral state, against a nation which had guaranteed her neutrality. Does it not prove that the moral value of a treaty depends on the weight of armament behind it? Treaties are to blame for the desolation of Belgium; and the treaties, or alliances, or ententes, or engagements, or whatever diplomatists call them, that have been the cause of all the dreadful havoc, are those which united France and Russia, and united Britain and France. These engagements have been feared from the first by all men who look beyond the point of their noses. The policy of the British Foreign Office, ever since secret arrangements were en-

tered into with the French and Spanish Governments in 1904, has been the most sinister menace to the peace of Europe.

When the war is over international lawyers may be asked to define the position of a neutral state that acts in conjunction with signatories of its Treaty of neutrality against other signatories before its provisions are in any way violated. Fitzmaurice, in dealing with the negotiations of the Powers in connection with the Suez Canal, said:

"The world knew of the 'neutralization' of Belgium and of the Black Sea; and it had heard of the neutralization of the Republic of Cracow. But the essence of those and other analogous arrangements was the exclusion of the military and naval forces of the Powers from entry upon the neutralized territories and seas."

If the essence of the Belgian treaty was the exclusion of the military and the naval forces of the Powers how could the *casus belli* of this war be the Treaty of 1839, when Britain was engaged to France and Russia against Germany and Austria before Germany invaded Belgium? Well may some curious people ask the very pertinent question, Would Britain have taken action against the French if they had been the first to invade Belgium? Diplomatic circumstances alter international cases. How they have altered over a period of half a century beats all the ideas of topsy-turvydom that Gilbert or Lewis Carroll ever dreamed of. Take Egypt: Lord Derby in 1871 would fight for the neutrality of Egypt. In 1857 Palmerston wrote the following to Lord Clarendon:

"PICCADILLY, March 1st, 1857.

"My dear Clarendon,

"As to the Emperor's schemes about Africa, the sooner Cowley sends in his grounds of objection the better. It is very possible that many parts of the world would be better governed by France, England, and Sardinia than they are now; and we need not go beyond Italy, Sicily, and Spain for example. But the alliance of England and France has derived its strength not merely from the military and naval power of the two states, but from the force of the moral principle upon which that union has been founded. Our union has for its foundation resistance to unjust aggression, the defence of the weak against the strong, and the maintenance of the existing balance of power. How, then, could we combine to become unprovoked aggressors, to imitate in Africa the partition of Poland by the conquest of Morocco for France, of Tunis and some other state for Sardinia, and of Egypt for England? And, more especially, how could England and France, who have guaranteed the integrity of the Turkish Empire, turn round and wrest Egypt from the Sultan? A coalition for such a purpose would revolt the moral feelings of mankind, and would certainly be fatal to any English Government that was a party to it. Then, as to the balance of power to be maintained by giving us Egypt, but we do not want the burden of governing Egypt, and its possession would not, as a political, military, and naval question be considered, in this country, as a set-off against the possession of Morocco by France. Let us try to improve all these countries by the general influence of our commerce, but let us all abstain from a crusade of conquest which would call upon us the condemnation of all other civilized nations."

It would be difficult for the fiercest opponent of present foreign policy to crowd into the same space a blacker indictment than time itself has made of the fine sentiments of Palmerston set down in that

letter. Egypt! What memories the name brings in a flash to the student of foreign policy. Denshawi! The partition of Morocco! Shades of Algeciras and Agadir! And all that has been done or sanctioned by Britain up to this year would in 1857 "revolt the moral feelings of mankind and would certainly be fatal to any English Government that was a party to it!" What a commentary on the electors of to-day!

After all, known treaties are the least significant work of diplomatists. What is written down in them may some day be revealed; but secret agreements and tacit understandings made by the agents of Governments may be without end, and their true import never reach the people until they are at each other's throats. To what base commitments nations have been pledged by their diplomatists, the records of the nineteenth century give us but an inkling. The cross purposes of the chancelleries seem to be without limit. Driblets of information left behind by ambassadors and secretaries of legations frequently show that what is one nation's meat is another's poison. Lord Granville seems to have been an exceptional man; one who kept this country fairly free from entanglements. The difficulties of his position in the eighties may be gleaned from this passage from Fitzmaurice:

"Good relations were now restored with Germany and France; but if a struggle was to take place with Russia, Italy was also a factor to be taken into account. By the Triple Alliance of 1882 the German Government was assured of the support of Austria-Hungary and Italy against any attack by Russia or by France. By the subsequent Treaty of 1884 with Russia a further security had been

obtained by Germany against a French attack. The substance of this Treaty, though not actually known, was probably suspected by the Italian Government, and her statesmen apprehended that Germany, once assured of the neutrality of Russia, might in the end attach a diminished importance to the friendship of Italy. They consequently desired, by means of an understanding with Great Britain, to obtain a further security for their northwestern and maritime frontier against France, and hoped to secure it by offering effective military support in Egypt, in return for an assurance of naval aid in the Mediterranean in case of a French attack on Italy. Advantageous as such an offer in many respects might appear, Lord Granville adhered to the view that British policy consisted in avoiding entangling bargains with particular Powers in Egypt. The choice, in his opinion, still lay between the European concert and individual action by Great Britain. In the financial negotiations, it has been seen, he had supported the proposals of Lord Northbrook for the latter. He had ended by having to consent to the former. But he had at least escaped joining in an Anglo-French guarantee."

The changes which have taken place since that time, so vast and opposite they are, fill one with amazement that the foul idols of diplomacy, no matter by what name they are called, should be superstitions still in the minds of the British people. What diplomacy cost Britain in the twenty years, since Bright congratulated the audience at Birmingham in 1864 to the year when Gordon set out on his mission in Egypt, must be incalculable. And what did the British masses get in return? In 1884 the burning domestic questions were the franchise, education, land, the Church, and Ireland. Since 1864 some little progress, very little, had been made. Russia still threatened the peace of Europe and was

a danger to western civilization and individual liberty. The work of foreign affairs entailed enormous sacrifices of blood and money. The peerage increased by scores; the cost of poor-relief, infant mortality, insanity, all increased. Social evils spread; the slum in the towns and the unsanitary cottage in the country became the forcing-houses of consumptives. The army of the unemployed had its battalions in every town in the land. But more and more money was found by the churches for foreign missions; and slowly the work of converting the heathen to a Christian method of life made progress, and the bayonet and high explosives were the symbols that impressed the peoples of Asia and Africa that England was the land of the free.

CHAPTER IV

FRIENDSHIPS

"For all purposes of a resident ambassador, I hear persons extensively and well acquainted among our foreign embassies at this date declare, That a well-selected *Times* reporter or 'own correspondent' ordered to reside in foreign capitals, and keep his eyes open, and (though sparingly) his pen going, would in reality be much more effective; — and surely we see well he would come to a good deal cheaper! Considerably cheaper in expense of money; and expense of falsity and grimacing hypocrisy (of which no human arithmetic can count the ultimate cost) incalculably cheaper! If this is the fact, why not treat it as such? If this is so in any measure, we had better in that measure admit it to be so! The time, I believe, has come for asking with considerable severity, How far is it so? Nay, there are men now current in political society, men of weight though also of wit, who have been heard to say, 'That there was but one reform for the Foreign Office,— to set a live coal under it,' and with, of course, a fire-brigade which could prevent the undue spread of the devouring element into neighbouring houses, let that reform it! In such odour is the Foreign Office too, if it were not that the Public, oppressed and nearly stifled with a mere infinitude of bad odours, neglects this one,— in fact, being able nearly always to avoid the street where it is, escape this one, and (except a passing curse, once in the quarter or so) as good as forgets the existence of it."

— Carlyle, *Latter-Day Pamphlets.*

It is hard to believe there was a time when Germany desired neither colonies nor fleets. We have

heard so much in recent years of Germany wanting our place in the sun, of her determined policy to wrest from us all our colonies, that the Bismarck of the early seventies seems a personage connected with the Swiss admiralty rather than a Chancellor in Berlin. A day or two ago a reputable journal told its readers that the whole of the present trouble came from the ambition of Bismarck to found an empire as vast as that of Britain, with naval and merchant fleets dominating all the seas. The statement was not true; but in war-time that is a small matter. It was, however, a relief to find neither Nietzsche nor Treitschke responsible for the existence of the Kiel Canal and the Hamburg-American Line. The cry "Colonies for Germany" had no force until 1883, and then Bismarck had only an electioneering affection for it. Ten years earlier he told Odo Russell that "Colonies would only be a cause of weakness, because colonies could only be defended by powerful fleets. Many colonies had been offered him — he had rejected them, and wished only for coaling stations acquired by treaty from other nations." The letters of Lord Ampthill indicate clearly how the change in Bismarck's policy came about:

"I am in perfect despair at Prince Bismarck's present inclination to increase his popularity before the general election by taking up an anti-English attitude. Compelled by the colonial mania, which has gradually come to the surface in Germany, to act contrary to his better convictions in the Angra Pequeña question, he has discovered an unexplored mine of popularity in starting a colonial policy. . . . The laxity of our quarantine regulations has always been a German grievance, and the news that the German

Government has brought it before the Conference, has been hailed with enthusiastic approval in the German press. Men like Professor Virchow and Dr. Koch accuse us openly of having brought the cholera into France."

In 1884 Lord Granville wrote to Lord Ampthill:

"I have never had a more arduous fight; the difficulty being that the Colonial Office had a very strong case which they had already put in writing, and their opposition was strongly backed by the Chancellor . . . Bismarck's attitude is disagreeable. He has always been violently opposed to colonization. He is now obliged to yield . . ."

Rulers may have short reigns, but they have sometimes long memories. In all the weary wranglings between London and Berlin in the early eighties there is nothing more noticeable than the suspicion in Bismarck's mind of all our manœuvring with regard to his colonial grievances. There was much to remember which would cause suspicion. Fitzmaurice gives some reason for this. In thinking over the following extract, it may be well for us to let our minds go back to early August, and recollect how chary our Foreign Minister was of touching the Luxembourg question when the neutrality of that state was an affair of the hour. Fitzmaurice lifts the curtain and reveals these signposts of foreign policy which were not to our credit:

"In the Liberal Secretary of State for the Colonies, Prince Bismarck had not failed to recognize the old Conservative Foreign Secretary, the Lord Stanley of 1867, who in his opinion had betrayed Europe over the Luxembourg question by allowing his own signature to the Treaty of that year to be explained away: a proceeding which he had never forgiven. In order to avoid war between France

and Prussia, it had been agreed that Luxembourg should be neutralized, that the Powers should guarantee the neutrality of the Duchy, and that it should be placed under their collective guarantee. But the ink was hardly dry on the paper which embodied these conditions before explanations were added as to the character of this collective guarantee by Lord Derby, then Prime Minister, which seemed to reduce the international sanction thereby given to the level of a moral sanction only. The Treaty, it was explained, gave a right to make war, but it imposed no obligation; none in any case on any of the high contracting Powers, unless the others all fulfilled their own obligations simultaneously. If this interpretation were correct, Lord Granville had said at the time, speaking from the benches opposite, it was difficult indeed to understand the importance which Russia had attached to the guarantee, or why Lord Stanley had shown such hesitation in becoming a party to it. The old wound still rankled, and if in 1884 considerations of domestic policy were pushing Prince Bismarck into a course of conduct hostile to Great Britain in order to secure the colonial vote in the German Parliament, he was not discouraged by the reflection that he was simultaneously annoying the Colonial Secretary. There were those also who deemed that Prince Bismarck enjoyed the thought that he was once more opening up the ancient chapter of accounts with England, which, notwithstanding all the recollections of 1814–5, no German statesman has ever entirely forgotten in regard to the betrayal of Frederick the Great by Lord Bute in 1762, when the British Minister not only deserted his ally, but while the alliance still subsisted was believed to have revealed the plans of Frederick for the next campaign against France to Choiseul himself."

In foreign affairs the devil is really just as black as he is painted; and the British devil is as black as the Continental devil. "Love your neighbour as

yourself," was not a text to be found over the bed in the guest chambers at Downing Street, nor yet in the Continental chancelleries. Distrust, suspicion, intrigue, and bitter memories animated the vast majority of men who were entrusted with the construction of treaties, friendships, and alliances. Odo Russell wrote from Berlin in 1881 to Lord Granville:

"For ten years have I preached confidence in Bismarck as a means of success in foreign policy, but in vain! I never could overcome the deep-rooted distrust his wish for a cordial understanding with England inspired at home."

Bismarck himself found the want of consistency in the policy of successive British Cabinets a source of great vexation. In a letter he wrote in 1883 he complained of the "astounding policy of succeeding English Cabinets." In the same letter he said:

"Assuming that the ambition of an English administration in regard to Egypt were to overstep the limits which, in my opinion, a reasonable British policy ought to respect, we should not feel called upon to quarrel with England, even out of friendship for other Powers. . . . The greatest difficulty, however, we encounter, in trying to give a practical expression to our sympathies for and our relations with England, is in the absolute impossibility of confidential intercourse in consequence of the indiscretion of English statesmen in their communications to Parliament, and in the absence of security in alliances for which the Crown is not answerable in England, but only the fleeting Cabinets of the day. It is therefore difficult to initiate a reliable understanding with England otherwise than publicly and in the face of all Europe. Such public negotiations from their initiation, and even without arriving at any definitive result, would be highly detrimental to most of

our European relations; but all these difficulties should not be allowed to stand in the way of our cordially entertaining any advances made to us, or to prevent us from cultivating the consolidation of our and Austria's friendship with England."

A sidelight is thrown on our Foreign Office by Lord Acton, who in his letters to Mary Gladstone said:

"Yes! at last, foreign affairs are in a very wretched way, and are unjustly and unreasonably injuring Mr. Gladstone's own position. If Morier is still in England, I wish he could see him before Petersburg. He is our only strong diplomatist; but he is only strong.

"You know that for all people not private friends of his own —— is disappointing. He is a bad listener, easily bored and distrustful of energetic men who make work for themselves and for the Foreign Office. Morier, in particular, has force without tact, and stands ill with a chief who has tact without force."

The work of the Foreign Office, in conjunction with similar departments abroad laid, in the eighties, the foundations of the vast scheme of armaments we have to carry to-day. It seemed then that the more we tried to preserve the peace the more strained foreign relations became. When we were not quarrelling with Germany, we were not on speaking terms with Russia; when we were not colonizing African deserts, to use Mr. Chamberlain's phrase, we were fighting the battles of the Ameer. There were bitter attacks and votes of censure in the House of Commons, but for the most part on strictly party lines; the Opposition dearly desiring for themselves an opportunity of keeping up the grand tradition of

the Foreign Office. In 1886 the following resolution was moved:

"That in the opinion of this House it is not just or expedient to embark in war, contract engagements involving grave responsibilities for the nation, and add territories to the Empire, without the knowledge and consent of Parliament."

It was lost by only four votes. It was opposed by Mr. Gladstone, though he did not attempt to defend the Foreign Office system as an ideal one.

We now enter upon the period when the rise in expenditure on armaments must be traced very closely. Beginning just after the policy of "Colonies for Germany" became popular, in 1887, the figures for naval expenditure of Britain, France, Russia, and Germany were as follows: Britain £12,375,000, France £8,452,000, Russia, £4,352,000, and Germany £4,179,000. In 1892 the French fleet visited Kronstadt, and in 1893 the Russian fleet visited Toulon. Wild demonstrations took place on both occasions. Germany was not delighted with the sentiments expressed by the orators at the dinners given to the officers of the dual navies. The French shouted, "Long live Russia," and the Russians shouted, "Long live France." The peace of Europe was the only aim of the demonstrators at these feasts. At a dinner given at the Élysées Palace, the Russian ambassador said:

"Before drinking a toast to which will respond from the depths of their hearts, not only those who are within these walls, but even those — and, that, too, with equal force — whose hearts near by and far away, at all the points of great, fair France, as also in all Russia, at the present

moment are beating in unison with ours,—permit me to offer—" and so on and so on, " the true significance of the magnificent peaceful festivities, etc., etc."

Czar, and President, and ambassadors, and bishops, etc., etc., all united in glorifying the " peaceful festivities." Naval demonstrations have no other object! Anyway, Germany did not rejoice. The figures for naval expenditure for the Entente Powers and Germany in 1897 were as follows: Britain £21,972,000, France £10,444,000, Russia £6,239,000, and Germany £6,467,000. These are an enormous increase for peace establishments! Russia and France combined spent that year over £10,000,000 more than Germany. When it is assumed by politicians and journalists that Germany is to blame for all the vast millions spent on navies in recent years, it would be just as well if it were shown when and how Germany led the way. One writer on naval affairs, whose articles occupy much space in the monthly reviews, stated recently that Germany began the armament race at the time of the Boer War. There is no evidence of this in the figures of expenditure; and to these we must look, no matter what the Kaiser said in his speeches at that time.

Let us begin with the year before the war in South Africa broke out. In 1898 Britain spent £25,674,000, and Germany spent £5,972,000; a difference of less than £20,000,000. After all the agitation in Germany for a colonial policy, there was no great expansion in fleet building. Indeed the Franco-Russian celebrations at Kronstadt and Toulon fell within a period when Germany pushed ahead in naval affairs. From 1892–3 the actions of

France and Russia must not be left out of account in tracing the growth of Germany's navy. It has been the policy of British Governments and the press to concentrate attention on Germany and Britain alone, as if Germany had no other consideration than naval expansion solely against England. Now at the close of the Boer War, in 1904, Britain spent £42,431,000 and Germany spent £11,659,000; a difference of over £30,000,000. In 1904 our expenditure on the navy was equal to a four or five Power standard. Germany then spent less than France or Russia. The figures for 1904 are instructive: France £12,517,143, Russia £12,072,-381, and, as Germany had to reckon with both countries since the "peace festivities," no one can say her naval expenditure was more of a menace to the peace of Europe than that of France and Russia. If we take the years 1890 and 1901 and compare the figures of France and Russia with those of Germany we shall see how "peace festivities" conduce to fleet building.

	France	*Russia*	*Germany*
1890	£ 8,060,000	£ 4,360,000	£ 4,938,000
1901	£13,107,701	£11,659,766	£ 9,624,956

France and Russia were spending against Germany at the rate of a two and a half Power standard. The British Government and a certain well-informed section of the press knew that, but it was not the game to give the show away. Admiral von Tirpitz, speaking in the Reichstag, in 1900, said:

"We should be in a position to blockade the Russian fleet in the Baltic ports, and to prevent at the same time

the entrance to that sea of a French fleet. We must also protect our ports in the North Sea from blockade."

Well might the Admiral of the German navy set industriously about the business of preparing to meet his "peaceful" neighbours. He perhaps had his eye on M. Delcassé, who had great ambitions for France in Morocco. It is nauseating to think of all the intrigue, the chicanery, and the lying, that were expended over the Moroccan affair, and to read it again at this time is enough to fill one with the desire of Carlyle's friend to place a live coal under the Foreign Office, and all such departments wherever found. To think of our claim to uphold the integrity and independence of Belgium, after the Lansdowne-Grey traffickings with France and Spain in connection with Morocco, is extremely humiliating. A Government pledged to uphold the integrity and neutrality of a territory, which, behind the back of men representing nations determined to carry out that policy, makes secret arrangements to allow that territory to be partitioned, is not morally in a position to uphold the independence and integrity of a South Sea Island. It is a revolting page in the history of diplomacy that records the secret negotiations affecting Morocco. In *Morocco in Diplomacy*, Mr. Morel says:

"France had in 1901 and 1902 publicly assured Morocco upon repeated occasions that she had not the least intention of threatening the independence or the integrity of that state. France had formally and publicly declared in an agreement with Great Britain that she had no intention of altering the political status of Morocco. France and Spain had formally and publicly declared their firm attachment to the independence and integrity of Morocco.

France and Spain, and, by implication, Great Britain, were, therefore, publicly pledged towards Morocco and towards the world at large to maintain the integrity and independence of Morocco. In point of fact, France, Spain, and Britain had privately entered into contracts with one another whereby the destruction of the independence and integrity of Morocco was decreed, the date of the event to depend upon circumstances."

To bargain away Moroccan independence and integrity for one or two paltry advantages gained from France in the Mediterranean was an act of treachery.

The Agreement between France and Britain respecting Egypt and Morocco was signed April 8th, 1904. Our relations with Germany at that time may be inferred from the following excerpt from an interview, published in the *Nineteenth Century Review,* with Count von Bülow, the German Chancellor:

"I cannot conceive that the idea of an Anglo-German war should be seriously entertained by sensible people in either country. If they will coolly consider the enormous damage which even the most successful war of this character would work upon their own country, and when they reckon it out it will be found that the stake is much too high in view of the certain loss. For this reason, I, for my part, do not take the hostility of a section of the English press too tragically. I hope that the destinies of the two countries will always be determined by those cool heads who know that the best advantage of Germany and England will be served not only for the present, but for all future time so far as it is discernible to the human eye — by the maintenance of the present pacific relations."

The *North German Gazette* in March, 1904,

said, "so far as can be gathered at the moment," German interests in Morocco were not in danger, as France had repeatedly stated that "neither the conquest nor occupation" of Morocco was contemplated. M. Delcassé assured the German ambassador at Paris that it was the wish of France "to uphold in Morocco the existing political and territorial status." Four days after Britain and France signed the secret articles attached to the public declaration, the German Chancellor said in the Reichstag that he had not been notified of the declaration, but he saw no reason to believe that it was directed against Germany:

"We are interested in that country (Morocco), as, moreover, in the rest of the Mediterranean, principally from the economic standpoint. Our interests therein are, before all, commercial interests; also are we specially interested that calm and order should prevail in Morocco. We must protect our commercial interests in Morocco and we shall protect them. We have no reason to fear that they will be set aside or infringed by any Power."

So honest men generally believed; and indeed all through the rest of that year, millions of Britishers, Frenchmen, Spaniards and Germans, were utterly ignorant of the secret articles. These were not made known to the world until the Paris papers got hold of them and published them in November, 1911. In the early spring of 1905, the Emperor of Germany paid a visit to Tangier. If he had strangled Charon and invaded the dim plains of Helusion there could not have been a greater outcry in Christian Britain. Many journalists, ignorant of the secret articles, imagined the Emperor's visit

was "a blow on the heart" of Britain because of the Anglo-French Entente. The British press screamed at Germany, and the German press screamed at Britain. It was a dirty campaign condoned by the Foreign Office; some said, inspired by the Foreign Office. Anyway, it is only necessary to raise the landmarks here so that we may the better understand why naval expenditure rose to gigantic proportions in the ensuing years. Still, the words of a French Senator might be quoted, to indicate the opinion of an honest man as to the public and secret policies of the Anglo-French Agreement. Baron d'Estournelles de Constant, in February, 1912, said:

"The French Parliament, by an abuse morally, if not constitutionally, unpardonably was kept in ignorance of this policy. . . . Far from ensuring general peace, the arrangements of 1904 tended to compromise it. . . . Why was the French Parliament told only half the truth when it was asked to pass its opinion upon our arrangement with England? Why was it allowed to suspect that this arrangement had as its complement and corrective some secret clauses and other secret treaties? It is this, it is this double game towards Parliament and towards the world which becomes morally an abuse of trust. . . . Now the whole effort of the arrangement of 1904 appears to-day in its truth and in its vanity. It was a Treaty of friendship with England recognizing the freedom of our political action in Morocco and also proclaiming our will to respect the integrity of that country; that was what the public knew and approved. But the public was ignorant that at the same time, by other Treaties and by contradictory clauses hidden from it, the partition of Morocco between Spain and France was prepared, of that Morocco of which we guaranteed the integrity. There existed two irreconcilable

French policies in Morocco: that of the public arrangements, that is to say, a policy of integrity which was not the true one; and that of secret arrangements postulating a Protectorate and the partition of Morocco."

The reason the Emperor visited Tangier must be clear to any honest business man. The German Foreign Office had been deceived. The Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Lord Percy, said in the House of Commons, in April, 1905, that the German Government was not officially notified as to the Anglo-French Agreement having any reference to Morocco. France should have communicated it to Germany but she failed to do so. Germany was ignored.

Only a year before Lord Lansdowne left the Foreign Office he spoke at the Guildhall, and no doubt thought the Agreement he had made with France would help to keep the peace of Europe. After quoting from the American Secretary of State, Mr. Hay, that "war is the most ferocious and the most futile of human follies," he said:

"We can conceive no more terrible, no more life-long punishment, than that remorse that would be felt by any Minister who either from a fault of temper or from love of a passing popularity, or because they were unable to put themselves in the place of their opponents, brought upon the country the scourge of a needless war."

Yes, but the trouble is, that the work of the Foreign Office is usually done by men of long lineage and short vision. He hoped that something might be done "to give a stimulus to the existing desire for the discovery of some less clumsy and brutal

method of adjusting international disputes." Certainly not by making secret treaties!

Peace advocates all over the world believed when Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman took office that a new era had opened. Arbitration-men, disarmament-men, non-resistance men, thought this leader of the Liberal party would bring Britain into the promised land where brotherhood was something more than an abstraction. From Liberal platforms all over the country during the general election of 1906 audiences heard the gospel of peace and good-will among nations preached by thousands of orators. The new Prime Minister led the way at the Albert Hall, in December, 1905, when he said:

"It is vain, it is vain, to seek peace if you do not also ensue it. I hold that the growth of armaments is a great danger to the peace of the world. A policy of huge armaments keeps alive and stimulates and feeds the belief that force is the best, if not the only, solution of international differences. It is a policy that tends to inflame old sores and to create new sores. And I submit to you that as the principle of peaceful arbitration gains ground it becomes one of the highest tasks of a statesman to adjust those armaments to the newer and happier condition of things. What nobler rôle could this great country assume than at the fitting moment to place itself at the head of the league of peace, through whose instrumentality this great work could be effected."

Fine sentiments those, for a new government. After fourteen wars in a period of ten years even some Jingoes felt the time had come for a lower income-tax. Millions spent on Mad Mullahs, campaigns in India, expeditions to Tibet, Boxer feuds, and chastising Kruger for not giving the vote to

men in the Transvaal who in most cases would not have one at home,— these things had stimulated a spirit of arbitration in many an imperialist breast. Even Mr. Balfour was inclined to turn over a new leaf. He said:

"In future we shall not see wars, unless, indeed, we can conceive that either a nation or a ruler should arise who feel that they cannot carry out their schemes of aggrandizement except by trampling upon the rights of their neighbours. I see no prospect of any such calamity in Europe. It would indeed be a tragic reversion to ancient days if Europe had again to make a coalition against any too ambitious Power."

After that great utterance a few words on the secret articles of the Anglo-French Agreement might have aroused a very notable amount of interest.

It was Lord Rosebery, however, who touched directly on the question which concerns us now. He had upset a good many people in June, 1904, by denouncing the Anglo-French Agreement. Whether or not he knew anything about the secret articles, he said it was the most "onesided agreement ever concluded between two Powers at peace with each other," and added his hopes "that the Power which holds Gibraltar may never have cause to regret having handed Morocco over to a great military Power." In October, 1905, he said:

"I cannot understand why friendship with France would involve such violent polemics with Germany as now rage between the two countries, and which I do not believe represent the real feelings of the two nations, though they may represent the feelings of some or all of their Governments; of that I know nothing; but I do view those

polemics as a serious danger to peace, as poisonously influencing the two nations, and the growing generations of the two nations; and, therefore, I am one of those who deprecate most sincerely the view which appears to prevail in some quarters, that cordial relations with France mean irreconcilable animosity to Germany. Remember, that these are not solitary matters with which we are dealing. Those great nations represent millions of men, huge fleets, also prepared for war, that in some day when it is least expected, the feelings of a nation may become so exasperated that the guns, as was said on another occasion, may almost go off by themselves; and therefore, I beg of you carefully to think of the heavy responsibility that weighs on you and your representatives with regard to foreign affairs."

Only a few days before Lord Rosebery warned the country of the dangers which beset a foreign policy that breeds violent polemics between a Power with whom we had entered into friendly and secret compacts, and one that felt aggrieved by our want of diplomatic courtesy, Sir Edward Grey spoke on the question of alliances:

"People do say with perfect truth, that any question of entering into a definite alliance with regard to future contingencies with any Power whatever is one which should be carefully guarded and watched. An alliance which appears a source of strength to-day might, under some future conditions, become a matter of embarrassment; and, were the policy of alliances rashly entered upon, I quite admit that there would be a danger that this country might be led into undesirable entanglements. That, I think, is perfectly true; and all that should be borne in mind whenever it is a question of contracting any new alliance with a foreign power."

It is hard to believe these were the words of a man who in a few months would consent to the pro-

posal from the French Government that conversations between British and French military and naval experts should take place. What might England, and poor broken, crushed, outraged Belgium, to say nothing of France, have been spared if the advice laid down by himself had only been followed! If we had not been led into undesirable entanglements what slaughter would have been avoided! Or if all the philosophies and systems discovered since the beginning of this war had been known to the journalists and statesmen who have told us, when it is too late, what they ought to have known before Liége and Louvain! How misled in foreign affairs we have been ever since 1904! It is perfectly amazing now to read column after column in Liberal newspapers of but a year or two ago telling us to cultivate friendship with Germans; to find Minister's speeches interspersed with expressions of admiration for German culture and town-planning; — while all the time, they, as keepers of the British conscience, should have known that " Germans were only scheming to destroy us." Treitschke, Bernhardi and Nietzsche were not authors black-listed by the caretakers of municipal libraries, or placed on the list of forbidden books by the Home Office. Some people, indeed, found it much easier to get the works of these authors than to get information of secret treaties and understandings from the Government. Surely when Lord Haldane was at the War Office the Secret Service Department notified him of the existence of all these poisonous authors. Could Lord Rosebery have imagined, when he referred to the violent polemics of 1905, that all the journalists were thoroughly well-informed as to the real rea-

sons why we should be at daggers drawn with Germany? It was not always thus. Indeed there was a time when Liberal statesmen and journalists took offence at vulgar abuse of Germans. When a Cabinet Minister referred to Germany in a hostile way, or ventured to criticise the size of the silver used at banquets in Hades, indignant Liberals poured their censure on his head. Mr. Chamberlain, who in his latter days liked Germany's fiscal policy better than her foreign policy, once incurred the displeasure of the present Foreign Secretary by referring to the length of the spoons guests should use when they sup with the Devil. Sir Edward Grey touched on that breach of table manners when he spoke on foreign policy at Cheltenham in February, 1905:

"They would hear much of foreign policy, the parrot cry of Conservatives in distress. But when they talked of foreign policy, what policy did they mean? Was it the policy of the long spoon, or of the Triple Alliance of Great Britain, the United States, and Germany which Mr. Chamberlain had been anxious to bring about, but which had been dropped because the countries chiefly concerned did not take kindly to the idea? Did they mean the foreign policy which had moved British ships out of Port Arthur to let the Russian ships in? It was well to remember history sometimes, as they did not wish these things to be repeated."

Excellent advice after the fact. It is hard to find fault with the advice given to the electors before 1906 by the Foreign Secretary. It *is* well to remember history, difficult as that task seems to be for diplomatists. As to the Anglo-French Agreement, Sir Edward thought the spirit of it preferable to the letter. He admitted there had been diplomatic friction since the agreement had been made. He

also thought the policy of the Government of which Lord Lansdowne was Foreign Secretary had not been distinguished through all its years of office by consistency and continuity,— meaning continuity within limits, not in the sense that Bergson or Sir Oliver Lodge would use the term. Continuity in foreign policy to the ideal diplomatic mind was essential for the maintenance of the Empire. It was, however, practised only between the declining months of one Government and the adolescent months of its successor. It is a term more honoured at St. Stephen's than at Downing Street. That the Government should truly represent the people was of paramount importance in directing continuity of foreign affairs. Mr. Asquith in August, 1905, before he became Prime Minister dealt with this point:

"When he was told that it was essential to our interests as an Empire that the present Government, through Lord Lansdowne, should go on under existing conditions managing our foreign affairs, he pointed out that exactly the reverse was the case. They could not have a state of things more dangerous for the stable conduct of foreign relations and for the permanent arrangements of great and difficult questions with external Powers than one in which every foreign government knew perfectly well that it was dealing with caretakers, with persons who were only provisionally in power, and who had lost by a thousand manifest and indisputable signs the confidence of the very country in whose name they professed to speak."

Representation here means that the Kingdom should be governed by a party that has lost no bye-elections.

The Anglo-French Agreement was made in the

last year of the Conservative reign, and the Anglo-Japanese Treaty was signed after the last session of that reign closed. Some Liberal statesmen regarded these treaties with favour, but there was one who did not see eye to eye with his political friends. As to the Anglo-French Agreement, Lord Rosebery was opposed to it from the first. In March, 1905, he said:

"Let me take another agreement, as to which I am a well-known and conspicuous heretic, the Anglo-French Agreement. I am not going to say anything here about this which will make anybody's hair stand on end. I only wish to accentuate my own position in that matter, and to say that, while desiring as earnestly as any human being in these islands the inestimable boon of a good understanding with France, I have the deepest and most serious doubt as to the treaty by which that understanding was attained."

Again in October, 1905, he referred to the agreement:

"There is another agreement which the Government has concluded as to which there is a much more unanimous assent in this country, so far as I can gather — I mean the agreement with France. I myself am sworn down not to speak of that agreement. I am sorry to say that my prophecy as to the complications which must be the inevitable result has only been too abundantly fulfilled."

One cannot help but wonder what Lord Rosebery would have said if he had known of the secret articles attached to that agreement. Notwithstanding Mr. Asquith's statement as to the necessity of a government dealing with foreign affairs truly representing the people of Britain, Lord Percy, the Conserva-

tive Under-Secretary, did not see how any one could for a moment doubt that the Liberal party would faithfully fulfil the obligations which the Government had already entered into with various countries,—particularly the spirit and the letter of the understanding which they had made with France.

In December, 1905, the King sent for Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman. He formed a ministry, and in the opening speech of the General Election, the new Prime Minister said:

"As to our general policy to our neighbours, our general foreign policy, it will remain the same in Government as it was in Opposition. It will be opposed to aggression and to adventure, it will be animated by a desire to be on the best terms with all nationalities, and to co-operate with them in the common work of civilization. . . . We want relief from the pressure of excessive taxation, and at the same time we want money to meet our own domestic needs at home, which have been too long starved and neglected owing to the demands on the taxpayer for military purposes abroad. How are these desirable things to be secured if in the time of peace our armaments are maintained on a war footing? Remember that we are spending at this moment, I think, twice as much on the army and navy as we spent ten years ago."

The new Prime Minister set to work at once to reduce expenditure on armaments, and in the first two years of office the naval estimates were reduced by over £2,000,000. Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman died in April, 1908. Then in 1909 the estimates jumped up suddenly with an increase of £2,500,000. Since that year Britain has increased her expenditure on the navy from £36,059,652 to £52,261,703, while in the same period Germany

raised her expenditure from £20,090,000 to £23,284,531.

In the Guildhall speech, of 1908, Mr. Asquith, Sir Henry's successor, said:

"A variety of circumstances have recently caused the relations between Great Britain and Germany to become a subject of active public discussion. It is exactly a year since the German Emperor was the guest of your predecessor, my Lord Mayor, in this very hall. Some of us, and I was one, who were present on that occasion, cannot forget His Majesty's emphatic and impressive declaration that the governing purpose of his policy was the preservation of the peace of Europe, and the maintenance of good relations between our two countries. It is in the spirit of that declaration, the spirit which aims not only at peace, but at good will, that we desire to deal with other Powers, with Germany certainly not less than others."

The potentate who in March, 1905, upset us so much by his visit to Tangier, and who was the subject of many a journalistic atrocity for poking his nose into Moroccan affairs, was in a few short years the honoured guest of my Lord Mayor at the Guildhall, the palace where gastronomics are practised only by the most respectable and cultured epicures to be found near London on the ninth of November. Poor Lord Mayor, little did he know that he took a viper to his bosom. For all he knew the Emperor might have had a copy of *Thus Spake Zarathustra* secreted under his uniform. As a matter of course the Emperor's peaceful visit was followed speedily by a period of panic. There is nothing like emphatic avowals of peace for unsettling Jingoes. Continuity of foreign policy was again backed by con-

tinuity in naval policy. The reductions made under Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman did not suit the Whigs, who, at a loss for information as to what the German Emperor really meant by his cryptic announcement at the Guildhall, adopted the suggestion of an agent of the armament ring to start what might be called a "World Against Us" policy. True, we were on good terms with France and Russia, and our relations with Germany, according to the Prime Minister and the German Emperor, were all for the preservation of the peace of Europe. So amicable were the relations between Britain and Germany, in 1908, when the naval estimates were introduced, that the First Lord of the Admiralty and the German Emperor exchanged letters of banter, as Lord Rosebery said of the incident. The two Governments without alliance, or treaty, or entente, or secret articles, were bound together in the spirit which aims only at peace. But Lord Cromer did not think so. Something alarmed him. In the House of Lords, in July, 1908, he said:

"What I would ask, in the present condition of Europe, is the main duty which devolves on the Government of this country? For my own part, I have no sort of hesitation in replying to this question. Their main duty is to make provisions betimes for the European conflict which may not improbably be forced on us before many years have elapsed. I am aware that the mass of the people of this country, who do not follow foreign affairs with any very close attention, are not alive to the possibility of any such conflict taking place. I say it is the duty of a Government gifted with both patriotism and foresight, who have means of information at their disposal which is not available to the general public, to provide betimes for that danger — a danger of

which I, in common, I believe, with most people who can speak with real authority on foreign affairs, am very firmly convinced."

Germany was the country Lord Cromer had in mind; there was no other country in Europe that could directly force a European conflict on us. So all the fine statements of the Prime Minister and the sophistical utterances of the Foreign Secretary did not allay the agitations of those men who had "means of information" at their disposal. What information? That was the time when Mr. Mulliner was busy finding men who would believe his yarns about German naval expansion. We shall deal later on with that "information." Anyway, Lord Cromer's statement was more than a warning; it was an indictment of the Foreign Office system. It was also a reflection on the Admiralty and the Government. If it meant anything at all it meant that a policy of secrecy, hyperbole, and evasion, enabled the Foreign Secretary and the First Lord of the Admiralty to withhold from the House and the country the real state of affairs, and conceal from the people the nature of the information Lord Cromer, not a member of the Government, had in mind when he made his speech.

CHAPTER V

ENEMIES

The people is a beast of muddy brain
That knows not its own strength, and therefore stands
Loaded with wood and stone; the powerless hands
Of a mere child guide it with bit and rein;
One kick would be enough to break the chain.
But the beast fears, and what the child demands
It does; nor its own terror understands,
Confused and stupified by bugbears vain.
Most wonderful! With its own hand it ties
And gags itself — gives itself death and war
For pence doled out by kings from its own store.
Its own are all things between earth and heaven;
But this it knows not; and if one arise
To tell this truth, it kills him unforgiven.
— *Campanella,* translated by John Addington Symonds.

"I tell you: one must have chaos within to enable one to give birth to a dancing star." In the middle of the last century there was chaos within Germany, enough to give birth to Nietzsche. Schopenhauer the pessimist, Bismarck the imperialist, Strauss the rationalist, Moltke the militarist, Lassalle the philosophical socialist, and Treitschke the absolutist — all, in their various directions, labouring in a Christian country — the strife of the new against the old, the battle between evil and good — created the intellectual chaos from which the gentle, fastidious, retiring advocate of the superman burst out like a

dancing star. The Christian state which in its business from one year's end to another denied and even derided every one of the beatitudes of Jesus, was the field that awaited Nietzsche's work. Intellectual riot was fast overcoming Hegelianism and Lutheranism; the period which must come under fundamentally false conditions when the hypocrisy and cant of society are fiercely attacked by those who are bold enough to point out where life is not lived as life is preached, had about reached its meridian. Strong men had surveyed the field before Nietzsche; Marx had done something to prepare the ground; and earlier still, Max Stirner had put in the blade of his uprooting plough; Michael Bakunin also had left traces in Germany after the disturbances of 1849. His pronouncement, "we object to all legislation, all authority, all influence, privilege, patented, official and legal, even when it has proceeded from universal suffrage; convinced that it must always turn to the profit of a dominating and exploiting minority, against the interests of the immense majority of the enslaved," found an echo in that sublime phrase of Nietzsche, "where the State ceaseth there beginneth that man who is not superfluous."

Christianity had been on its trial,— the new "evil." Men were dissatisfied with the verdict "not proven," and spent their days in discovering fresh evidence against it. From the conflict of diverse views in economics, religion, and politics, Nietzsche arose with his lonely David, not of Israel, but of Sahara.

It was time for a new philosophy. Whether the philosophy of the superman will be of as much value to mankind as the disciples of Nietzsche believe, is

not of great consequence; because a world of intellectual supermen would be the one that Nietzsche of all men would not live in, even if the "much-too-many" had passed from the conditions which necessitated the invention of the State. An intellectual change would not alter the position of the superfluous man, nor make men practise what they preach. Yet it may be probable that no one saw so clearly the terrific force of Dostoevsky's *Myshkin* as Nietzsche. Some one may some day take up the tangled skein of his thought and connect its strands with those of the men who influenced his work.

His description of Europe in the years between 1860 to 1880 will stand; from music to women, from philosophy to oratory, from alcohol to politics, it will satisfy the most persistent investigator. Critic, iconoclast, and illuminator of society and systems, he stands pre-eminent. He soars high in many respects above our own Carlyle whom he disliked so much. He thought he saw in Carlyle the lack of those fundamentals he despised. But intellectual and physical supermen without equal rights — not equality — will be dispensable giants under proper economic conditions; namely, when the superfluous man comes into his own.

Gerhart Hauptmann, so it is reported, said that the German soldier goes to the front with a copy of *Thus Spake Zarathustra* in his knapsack. That is a pretty tall statement, but it is conceivable that many of the town-bred soldiers of Germany know something of Nietzsche. The real influence of Nietzsche has not, however, shown itself in any of the actions of the German people up to the present. They in no way appreciate his meaning of war — less indeed than

English journalists. "I see many soldiers: would I could see many warriors! 'Uniform' they call what they wear: would it were not uniform what they hide under it!" Prussians have not the sense of humour to grasp all there is in his *Joyful Wisdom*. This is written with all respect for the great body of literary Britain who during the war have been industriously picking the mote out of German eyes. There is nothing even savouring of the individualism of Nietzsche in German life. Even Richard Strauss in his tone-poem caricatures the superman; though he has made an attempt recently to approach *Dionysus*. The largest political body in Germany is socialistic — anathema to Nietzsche, the Government is bureaucratic! — invented for the much-too-many, and individualism cannot exist in an army or navy; as for the church,— well, as there has never been room in it for Jesus, it is not likely that any lowlier individualist may attempt to declare from its pulpits that *"the Kingdom of God is within you."*

There are so many diverse notions of Individualism that it may be opportune to ask, What is the individualism of Nietzsche? True individualism it is not, for it is without economic foundation. His will-to-life-power does not go deep enough; it lacks a subsistence-basis — hence, perhaps, his notion of slaves. It is exceedingly difficult to place a fundamental value on the individualism of Nietzsche for he so often confuses man and nature, and the functions of both. Delve into his philosophy as deeply as you will, on this matter astounding contradictions abound; he is so full of multitudes, as Whitman would say. Then in the search for fundamentals,

Dionysus appears so often perhaps to mock our exertions. Take the passage:

"'Exploitation' does not belong to a depraved, or imperfect, or primitive society: it belongs to the Nature of the living being as a primary organic function; it is a consequence of the intrinsic Will to Power which is precisely the will to life. Granting that as a theory this is a novelty — as a reality it is a *fundamental fact* of all history: let us be so far honest to ourselves!"

Nietzsche here assumes he is propounding something new, something he has discovered as a fundamental fact, but the word "exploitation" has old and new meanings. If the sentence is to be applied to man's right to exploit equally with other men all natural resources, then the statement is compatible with true Individualism. But, if, on the other hand, the statement and the use of the word "exploitation," are to be applied to some men's power to exploit the labour of other men, then it refers to our old enemy Monopoly, and is no new theory or fundamental fact. The context from which the statement is torn refers to individuals; but "exploitation" belonging "to the Nature of the living being as a primary organic function," is a phrase which carries the understanding back to man's struggle with Nature for subsistence, and the fundamental basis of equal rights to exploit the earth for the satisfaction of his desires and needs. Who can tell us just where Nietzsche stood on this question? Georg Brandes? Perhaps! Certainly he saw clearly the basic fault in the contentions of Marx and Lassalle.

Yet, it would not be strange if this hater of everything German was, at this time, shaping in the minds of German soldiers tendencies against established forms in the Fatherland, more dangerous than all the armaments of the Allies and their millions of men battling east and west. If they have got hold of the true Nietzsche, the Nietzsche who saw that "*Europe wishes to be one*"— then it is probable that Germans may now be in the throes of a vast intellectual upheaval.

Though he strikes without mercy at the God made by man, the vain, malicious, vindictive God of a Christianity which is all that Jesus was not, Nietzsche never assails the religious man: "rare one, solitary soul!" he would say of him. God is associated with Christianity —"invented by Jews," — churches, rituals, etc. Passages in *Sanctus Januarius* reek with scorn of a man-made God. The gulf that lies between Jesus and Nietzsche is not wide; his appreciation of Dostoevsky is the fingerpost which points that way; but the gulf that yawns between Nietzsche and Christianity, as he sees it, cannot be spanned.

Whether Germans know the elusive, inspiring, nimble, attractive Nietzsche or no, a people who have a literature so rich in wondrous contradictions are a people whom the world must reckon with, for they are capable of great revolutions, unless an oriental sickness fall upon their intelligence. Through Nietzsche back to Novalis,— for these two sickly ones touched at many points. Both in different generations explored many of the bye-ways of intellectual life. Like Walt Whitman, Nietzsche perhaps saw tokens at the wayside.

"I wonder where I get those tokens,
Did I pass that way huge times ago and negligently drop them?"

Back to Novalis! Well, we shall see. Anyway, no thinker who brings the future into his hour of meditation need be afraid of Nietzsche. Truth was evil long before he wrote. A list of "evil" men would take us back to Newton, to Galileo, to Jesus. Truth is always "evil" when it falls upon established forms.

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How has it been with us? The antipathy to Germany, since the Kruger telegram and Mr. Chamberlain's speech, delivered in the early days of the Boer War, increased in venom and bitterness. From 1905 there has been a campaign unremitting in its hatred, though at intervals checked by the very intensity of its spleen,— as a fit of coughing brought on by vociferous anger stops for a while the reviling of a virago,— that has on several occasions brought the two countries to the verge of hostilities. The crusade for a protective tariff, which began in 1902, taught the people a form of militant Christianity in commercial affairs which roused every brutish instinct and subjugated all the virtues of brotherhood. The catchwords of the propaganda were Bismarckian. Retaliation was one of the words to conjure with; and "Don't take it lying down!" was the phrase to stir lethargic audiences to demonstrations of vindictive joy. "Hit the foreigner back," and "Make the foreigner pay the tax," were expressions which rung for three years from end to end of this Christian land. And everything made in Germany was, to a large section of the British peo-

ple, worse than garments worn by lepers. All the platform changes were rung on the seven deadly sins, making virtues of them for the needs of Mr. Chamberlain's campaign. Cobden's platitudes were laughed to scorn: "Peace and good-will among nations" was the cry of Britain's worst enemies. Hundreds of thousands of working men and women were daily told that the hated foreigner took the bread out of the mouths of the children of British artisans. Ministers of the gospel frequently presided over protectionist meetings while orators discoursed the most blatant rubbish a sensible, God-loving nation ever listened to.

No Nietzschean gospel ever went so far in that respect. Bands of landlords and manufacturers connived at getting for their land and their wares from the millions, whose purchasing power was extremely low, more than they were worth in a free and open market. All the greed, envy, and enmity of commercialism were let loose in that campaign by the maker of the South African War, to cover up the misdeeds of the Government of which he was Colonial Secretary. Lord Hugh Cecil, in referring to the campaign, said, "Its methods were repulsive. They were the methods of dragooning." Britain might not have had her Treitschke, but she had her Chamberlain. The time was surely ripe for the advent of a British Nietzsche. Steadily the churches had been getting emptier and emptier; the divines screamed to the people to come and worship God, but the people knew in a dumb, vague way they would not hear much about the All-Father even if they took the trouble to go. So they flocked to Brotherhood meetings of a strictly undenominational

character; and those who liked not religious services of any kind thronged to the platform of the atheist or the rationalist in the parks; thousands of others preferring the public-house to the squalor of the homes they are now shedding their blood to defend.

With the aristocratic class, what is popularly thought to be superman-philosophy was thought if it were not spoken. At the end of 1905, it would have been difficult for Diogenes to find a country under the sun where there was so deep a contempt for the poor and the meek held by the ruling class. Many British villages were not unlike slave compounds, and few were the men, who did not think politically as the squires thought, who dared to call their souls their own. Labourers in agriculture at any wage from twelve to sixteen shillings a week; miners living in hovels; railway porters at less than a pound a week; and cotton operatives packed into dull, drab streets of mean houses — these were some of the millions that were to breed a race of men whose destiny it would be to write on foreign battlefields new pages on the might of Christian Britain to uphold justice and national righteousness. That was the condition of Britain after the close of the Boer War.

During the Boer War it was the people who mafficked; since the beginning of this war sections of the press have mafficked; the people have been strangely circumspect. But a survey of the newspapers since the close of the Boer War reveals an almost uninterrupted exhibition of repellent Jingoism in the columns of most of the London penny papers. In tracing the history of our press campaign against

Germany one has to go back to the time when the German Emperor cast anchor at Tangier; when the British public, and perhaps the press, were ignorant of the secret articles to the Anglo-French Agreement. In that year there was a reduction of £3,500,000 in our navy estimates. This might have had something to do with the tremendous outburst in the press against the Emperor's visit to Morocco. Nevertheless, Jingo journalistic fury was of such a violent character that Lord Rosebery viewed the attack with grave apprehension. Even Mr. Broderick, who had been Secretary for War in a Conservative Administration, was moved to remark:

"There could be no personal feelings between the Government of this country and Germany. He would go further and say, there was no outstanding question of any description between the two governments, and that there was nothing that should raise animosity between them, and that there was nothing which stood between them and friendship. All the suggestions of misunderstandings might be put aside with those stories which had commended themselves to some minds, of plans for an irruption of 100,000 soldiers into Schleswig-Holstein, or of unexpected and entirely gratuitous attacks, which might serve to lubricate the pens of some pressmen, but which would get short shrift from any responsible statesmen."

There was, however, more truth than journalism in the report about an invasion of Schleswig-Holstein. Responsible political leaders in France understood that M. Delcassé told his friends that if Germany and France quarrelled, England was willing to mobilize her fleet, throw a force of 100,000 men into Schleswig-Holstein, and seize the Kiel Canal. Neither remonstrance from von Bülow in

Berlin nor censure from our leaders stemmed the flow of ink. The French Agreement was made the bone of contention in the foreign press; in Austrian, Italian, and German journals it was taken as a menace to the Triple Alliance, and in the yellow press of those countries a bitter agitation against Britain was carried on. The jaundiced school of writers in this country sent their shameful screeds all over the land in superlative efforts to outdo the acrimonious stuff published abroad. Soon the nation, or that part of it which revels in horrors, devoured the literature of carnage, and went to bed with a twelve-inch nightmare and woke to greet the columns of vindictive ravings from the pens of hirelings of the armament-ring. How much of all the campaign was inspired by the British and French departments for Foreign Affairs will never be known; no, not any more than the millions of roubles spent by Russia in corrupting a section of the foreign press. Still we do know something of the part played in the degrading affair by M. Delcassé. His own countryman, M. de Pressensé, once Foreign Editor of *Le Temps,* wrote:

"We know by what a series of faults an excellent situation was compromised. M. Delcassé, inebriated by the *entente* with England, of which he had been but an eleventh-hour artisan, hypnotized by the favour of the Czar, thought the hour had struck for heroic enterprises. He dreamed, if he did not conscientiously project, a sort of *revanche* by the humiliation of Germany."

In *Le Gaulois,* July 12th, 1905, M. Delcassé, a short time after his downfall, said:

"Of what importance would the young navy of Ger-

many be in the event of war in which England, I tell you, would assuredly be with us against Germany? What would become of Germany's ports or her trade, or her mercantile marine? They would be annihilated. That is what would be the significance of the visit, prepared and calculated, of the British squadron to Brest, while the return visit of the French squadron to Portsmouth will complete the demonstration. The *entente* between the two countries and the coalition of their navies, constitutes such a formidable machine of naval war that neither Germany, nor any other Power, would dare to face such an overwhelming force at sea."

And this was the man who was Minister for Foreign Affairs in France when the Anglo-French Agreement with its secret articles was signed. Yet there are journalists in Britain who lead their readers to believe that they are informed as to foreign affairs, who charge Germany with having provoked the rise in naval expenditure! The evidence is all the other way about.

Every man who raised his voice in protest against the articles of the Blue-Funk school was assailed as a traitor or a coward. The men of the bulldog breed wrote from behind the screens of editorial rooms their prodigious fulminations on "Little Englanders" and Pro-Boers. From the dust-bins of the Admiralty and the War Office they gathered flotsam and jetsam, the gossip of disappointed half-pay officers and clerks, often enough the rejected information of servitors not required again.

Mr. Bryce, in October, 1905, pointed to the danger of the press campaign:

"Press reports, press attacks, tend to inflame and irritate men's minds. When you are told day after day that some

one is hating you and watching his chance to attack you, you may begin to hate him, and put the worst construction on innocent acts. Harm has already been done which may take some time to remove."

Mr. Morley dealt with the same problem in his speech at Arbroath, about the same time Mr. Bryce spoke. Mr. Morley said:

" (Foreign Affairs) are the most obscure, the most delicate, the most complex, the gravest province of public business, and yet, oddly enough, this grave, obscure, delicate province is a free field, where people find it most easy to be, if you pardon the word, cocksure, where they think it is most appropriate to fly into a passion, and to use the worst language either about foreign nations or about those of their fellow-countrymen who do not happen to agree with them."

Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman and Sir Edward Grey also laid stress in their speeches on the necessity of responsible politicians doing something to heal the breach made by Jingo journalists between Great Britain and Germany.

Three months after the General Election the yellow press got down to work in real earnest. One paper told its readers that " there never was a Radical Government that was able to make itself respected abroad, and under the new régime at Westminster, British support of France will be worth precious little. And with the defeat of France, British prestige must inevitably suffer; but this is no more than might be expected." The press attack was marvellously effective. Under Mr. Haldane the Expeditionary Force was reorganized, on a mobilization basis, for service abroad, to comprise 150,000 men. In criticising the Haldane scheme, Lord

Roberts, in the House of Lords, fanned the flames of Jingo feeling in the country, and incidentally gave the yellow press scribes some material for future articles:

"If we were required to deal with 'a Continental situation' a striking force of much greater strength than 150,000 men would, in my humble opinion, be needed, if not at the very outset, long before any large number of reinforcements could be trained. We would under these circumstances be fighting against a most carefully organized army between two and three millions strong, and thoroughly fitted in all respects for war, the commanders of which would be fully cognizant of our unpreparedness and would give us as little breathing time as possible. I doubt whether it is realized in this country that the Continental armies, behind their vast mobilized strength, possess practically unlimited reserves. In Germany, for instance, though it is usually supposed that only about five million men would be subject to the extreme demand of the State, there are altogether actually no less than ten million men over fighting age who have passed through the ranks at one period or another."

Alarmists generally fastened on to this statement and pushed it for all it was worth. Lord Halsbury went so far as to say:

"As for Mr. Haldane, his profession of economy, combined with neglect of the military opinion of Earl Roberts and other experts, afforded a serious temptation to hostile countries to seek the first opportunity to humiliate and attack us."

In the autumn of 1906 a section of the Tory press did its best to whip up a navy scare because the Government reduced the estimates. "Patriotism is thrown to the winds," screamed the *Daily Mail.*

The scares promoted by the yellow press, and the bitter attacks on our Teutonic neighbour affected the disposition of Germany towards the Hague convention. Mr. Balfour did not hesitate to say that Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman's attitude was hypocritical, inasmuch as he took credit for strengthening the army and the navy while he attended the Hague peace meetings for disarmament. The Prime Minister told his audience at Manchester that "he knew that we have been suspected of a wish, a sinister wish, to embarrass Germany by raising the question." In explaining the situation he said:

"We thought it our duty to seize the opportunity which the Hague Conference offered for seeing whether a step might not be taken in the right direction for reducing armaments. I think we were right. . . . The German Government appears to believe that such a method is idle and illusory and, as they hold they can have no share in it, I recognize and respect the candour with which Prince Bülow has decided to stand aside from the discussion altogether."

The scaremongers kept up the attack. It was suggested that "the Government had wrecked the army and were now trying to wreck the navy." The statements of the panicmongers however reached such a limit that a Tory paper, in an article from a well-informed correspondent on naval affairs, said:

"The nation is in no danger whatever from the navies of Continental Powers. . . . Notwithstanding the volume and energy of attacks on the Admiralty, it is significant that neither in the House of Commons nor in the House of Lords has a single division been taken on any one of the questions at issue. This proves that either the Unionist Opposition is indifferent to or ignorant of the country's impending fate, or that the campaign against the Admiralty is the

work of windbags whose puncture and perforation by facts will be followed by deflation."

The position of our navy with those of Germany, France, and Russia was as follows:

Great Britain	*Germany, France, and Russia.*
1,132,205 tons.	1,108,280 tons.

Britain exceeded the tonnage of the next three Powers by 23,925 tons.

Let us review the march of events. The Lansdowne-Delcassé public and secret agreements about Morocco were signed in April, 1904. Neither Britain nor France notified Germany of the public agreement. The secret agreement meant that France, Spain, and Britain had contracted to violate the integrity and independence of Morocco. In March, 1905, the German Emperor visited Tangier with the object of safeguarding "efficaciously the interests of Germany in Morocco," to use his own words in his address to the Sultan's representatives. Then followed the war in the British and Continental press. But the secret articles were not made known until six years after the visit that caused the sensation in Britain and France. In January, 1906, Sir Edward Grey agreed with the French Government that conversations should take place between British and French military and naval experts. In the autumn of 1905, M. Delcassé was forced to resign his portfolio, and *Le Matin* published the story of Britain's willingness to send a force in support of France into Schleswig-Holstein. In April, 1906, the Belgian and British military authorities in Brussels entered into arrangements for the co-opera-

tion of a British Expeditionary Force of 150,000, with the Belgian army against Germany. Mr. Haldane announced in the following month of July that the force had been reorganized on a mobilization basis of 150,000. The Act of Algeciras was signed April 7th, 1906, sandwiched between the consent given by Sir Edward Grey to the British and French military and naval conversations, and the Brussels arrangement for Belgian and British military co-operation in the event of a war with Germany. These are the facts which cannot be denied by honest men. It may of course be necessary, playing the game of the chancelleries, for diplomatists and governments to deny some of these facts; but it takes only the very smallest experience to know what the denials of Ministers are worth.

The murder of the Austrian archduke, whether he was murdered by Russia, or Serbia, or Vienna, had little or nothing to do with this present war. It might have been a pretext for bringing things to a head, but to say it was the initial cause of the war is the most unprincipled falsehood a Jingo journal ever indulged in. This war had long beginnings; they lay in the "pathos of distance" as Nietzsche would say. Not the violation of the integrity and independence of Belgium, but the violation of the integrity and independence of Morocco. Not the antique treaty of 1839, but the secret articles which accompanied the Agreement of 1904,— which were not made known to the world until November, 1911, wherein Spain, France, and Britain had contracted for the partition of Morocco.

The scaremongers in the summer of 1908 held high carnival; the *Daily Telegraph* spread the legend

that the Government intended to float a loan of £100,000,000, so that we might be able to build a navy large enough to deal with Germany. Early in the New Year there was a great deal of electricity in the diplomatic air. Austria publicly accused Britain of a policy of deliberate malevolence. Sir Edward Grey repudiated the allegations and said they were sheer inventions. But neither the Foreign Secretary's protest nor the assurances of other Ministers as to the pacific intentions of the Government, seemed to allay the anxiety of Continental Powers or the perturbations of the alarmists at home.

On August 14th, 1908, Mr. Churchill, at Swansea, delivered a remarkable speech on our relations with Germany. This speech should be preserved, for there is a passage in it that makes strange reading now, when nearly the whole of the British press, day after day, tells us that the German people are a brutish race, trained by Sybel, Treitschke, and Bernhardi. When the war is over, diplomatic relations will be resumed; trade will spring up again between the two peoples; and a memory of what some men in the days before the actual strife have said of Germany and the German people, may be useful in establishing once more those relations which true Christian people may aspire to but never quite enjoy. The speech to be quoted from, and no apology is thought necessary for the length of the extract, was delivered only a few weeks after Lord Cromer, in the House of Lords, spoke of a European conflict which might be forced upon us before many years. Mr. Churchill said:

"I think it is greatly to be deprecated that persons should try to spread the belief in this country that war

between Great Britain and Germany is inevitable. It is all nonsense. In the first place, the alarmists have no grounds whatever for their panic or fear. . . . Look at it from any point of view you like, and I say you will come to the conclusion in regard to the relations between England and Germany that there is no real cause of difference between them, and although there may be snapping and snarling in the newspapers, and in the London clubs, those two great people have nothing to fight about, have no prize to fight for, and have no place to fight in. . . .

"What does all this snapping and snarling amount to after all? How many people do you suppose there are in Germany who really want to make a murderous attack on this country? I do not suppose in the whole of that great population of fifty or sixty millions of inhabitants there are ten thousand persons who would seriously contemplate such a hellish and wicked crime; and how many do you think there are in this country? I do not believe there are even that number to be found in our country. . . . But even if the fifteen thousand persons whom we will say in Germany and this country desire to make war on one another were as influential as one would think from the noise they make and the clatter they keep up, what about the rest of us? What about the one hundred millions of people who dwell in these islands and Germany? Are we all such sheep? Is democracy in the twentieth century so powerless to affect its will? Are we all become such puppets and marionettes to be wire-pulled against our interests into such hideous convulsions? I have a high and prevailing faith in the essential goodness of great people. . . . I have come here this afternoon to ask you to join with me in saying that far and wide throughout the masses of the British dominions there is no feeling of ill-will towards Germany. I say we honour that strong, patient, industrious German people, who have been for so many centuries divided, a prey to European intrigue and a drudge amongst the nations of the Continent. Now in the fulness of time, after many tribu-

lations they have by their virtues and valour won themselves a foremost place in the front of civilization. I say we do not envy them their good fortune; we do not envy them their power and prosperity. We are not jealous of them; we wish them well from the bottom of our hearts, and we believe most firmly the victories they will win in science and learning against barbarism, against waste, the victories they will gain will be victories in which we shall share, and which, while benefiting them, will also benefit us."

It is sad to think of sentiments such as those expressed by Mr. Churchill six years ago, and then of what is taking place now. Looking from the reign of terror which now exists in Belgium, back to the days when English statesmen believed the German people, "by their virtues and valour had won for themselves a foremost place in the front of civilization," it is difficult to associate with the Germany of Wagner and Richard Strauss and Lenbach, of Goethe and Schiller, and of Schopenhauer and von Humboldt, all the vandalism of Louvain, Dinant, and Malines.

CHAPTER VI

PANICMONGERS

"And he will lift up an ensign to the nations from afar, and will hiss unto them from the end of the earth: and, behold, they shall come with speed swiftly:

"None shall be weary nor stumble among them; none shall slumber nor sleep; neither shall the girdle of their loins be loosed, nor the latchet of their shoes be broken:

"Whose arrows are sharp, and all their bows bent, their horses' hoofs shall be counted like flint, and their wheels like a whirlwind:

"Their roaring shall be like a lion, they shall roar like young lions: yea, they shall roar, and lay hold of the prey, and shall carry it away safe, and none shall deliver it.

"And in that day they shall roar against them like the roaring of the sea: and if one look unto the land, behold darkness and sorrow, and the light is darkened in the heavens thereof."

— Isaiah.

On February 8th, 1909, the French and German Governments made a declaration of their intentions towards Morocco. This was done so that the two Governments might define the meaning they attached to the articles of the Algeciras Act in order to avoid misunderstanding in future. The German Government recognized the special political interests of France in Morocco, and resolved not to impede those interests. The Germans, pursuing only economic interests in Morocco, promised not to encourage any

other Power which might strive to gain economic privileges. The French Government reaffirmed its strong attachment to the maintenance of the independence and integrity of the Moroccan Empire, and contracted not to obstruct German commercial and industrial interests in that country.

Whether the peoples of Europe will ever again permit any diplomatic traffickings no one can tell; but if they do, then the worst that can happen will be too good for them. Perhaps it is difficult to swallow the perfidy which lies in the statement (in the document referred to above) that the French ambassador at Berlin in February, 1909, contracted with Germany to maintain the independence and integrity of Morocco; when France and Spain, with the sanction of Lord Lansdowne, had secretly engaged that France and Spain should partition Morocco. The secret articles were not published until November, 1911. And in the face of these facts, responsible statesmen allow the public to be told that Germany was the aggressor and deliberately planned a war against Britain! Such infamy is indeed hard to swallow. Yet, swallow it the public must, if democracy is ever to have a chance of bringing about in Europe a state of affairs that corresponds with ordinary mercantile honesty.

But are the influences that use the press too powerful for the people to overcome? When the public are up against such forces as armament rings, military and naval leagues, panicmongers, and the advertising department of Foreign Offices, the task does seem almost too much for the masses. The cunning, the subtlety, the avarice, the nepotism, the caste power, and the secrecy, that shield diplomatic action, are

fearful forces arrayed against the people who have not yet by a long way reached political freedom, let alone economic liberty. Think of the events of 1909, here in Britain, and then try to estimate what the public have to do.

One month after the signing of the German-French declaration respecting Morocco, Mr. McKenna, who had become First Lord of the Admiralty, introduced the naval estimates which showed an increase of two and three-quarters millions. They were met with a contemptuous note of rejection by Mr. Balfour. "Utterly insufficient," he flung out, and immediately the signal was given for one of the wildest orgies of Jingo feeling the country has ever suffered. And what was it all about? The Government's case was laid down by Mr. Asquith, who said:

"The first assumption was that the German paper programme — I think I described it as a paper programme — was one which might not be realized, and certainly would not be exceeded. That has turned out not to be true, because it is undoubtedly the case — I speak with as much reserve as I can about it, because I want to keep strictly within the verifiable truth — it is a fact that during the autumn of last year there was an anticipation with four ships which belong to the German programme of 1909–10 in the sense that orders were given, materials collected, it may be that in one or two cases, possibly in more, ships were actually laid down."

Acceleration of the German naval programme was the cause of the trouble and the reason why our estimates rose suddenly in 1909, so the Government said. But both Prince von Bülow and Admiral von Tirpitz denied the accusation. Indeed, the German Govern-

ment had made a most distinct declaration to our Government that it was not their intention to accelerate their programme. Referring to the declaration of the German Government, Mr. Asquith said:

"As a Government, believing as we do most explicitly in the good faith of those declarations, we cannot possibly put before the House of Commons and Parliament a programme based on the assumption that a declaration of that kind will not be carried out."

It will be seen, in spite of Mr. Asquith's words, that the declaration was thrown to the winds, and that the Government in a few weeks was swept off its feet by the storm of Jingo feeling in the country. We know now that the abominable scare was the work, not of a German Government whose word could not be relied on, but of a gang of British patriots connected with the armament-ring on the search for orders and dividends, and supported by a large section of the British press controlled by a syndicate. A Mr. Mulliner, once managing director of the Coventry Ordnance Company, was the ostensible instigator. In the habiliments of a patriot, he started a campaign that fostered hatred and hostility in millions of hearts and minds in both Germany and Britain. So early as May, 1906, Mr. Mulliner informed the Admiralty that the Germans were making preparations for increasing their navy to vast proportions. On March 3rd, 1909, Mr. Mulliner gave evidence before the Cabinet in support of the information he had brought to the notice of the Admiralty during a period covering nearly three years. In the *History of a Great Scare,* Mr. Perris says of Mr. Mulliner:

"For three years, in fact, this gentleman gave himself to the work of propagating the myth of a gigantic expansion of Krupp's works, in particular, and of German acceleration in general. It was an underground campaign; but we gather from subsequent letters and speeches that Mr. Mulliner's information, sent first to the War Office in May, 1906, 'was passed on to the Admiralty,' 'was discussed by them with several outsiders,' and then 'passed from hand to hand so that hundreds have read it.' Of this 'information,' I need now say nothing more than that, as soon as it became public, it was emphatically contradicted by Messrs. Krupp, through Mr. John Leyland, and other correspondents, and after some years it was practically admitted by the Government to be false, and that time has proved that it never had any real basis. It was, nevertheless, propagated with unremitting zeal, in forms more and more lurid, and with the gradual assent of the leaders of the Opposition."

It was on the information laid by Mr. Mulliner before the Cabinet on March 3rd, that the Government based their case for the enormous increase in the estimates. How deeply convinced the Cabinet was of the accuracy of the information presented by Mr. Mulliner, in spite of the denials of the German Chancellor and Admiral von Tirpitz, is to be gathered from Mr. Asquith's speech in the House of Commons:

"If any one will refer to the speech I made a year ago, he will see that I said with some confidence that whereas it would take the Germans thirty months to build one of these ships we could do it in twenty-four. I was not, of course, committing myself precisely to the number of months, but I did maintain that we had a substantial advantage in the rate of construction which would always enable us to quickly overtake them when the event occurred.

I am sorry to say it is not the case. I believed it to be the fact at the time at which I spoke, but there has been such an enormous development in Germany — I speak quite frankly to the House, because I am obliged to tell them these matters, and to let them understand why we economists have presented these estimates to the House — there has been such an enormous development in Germany, not only in the provision of ship yards and slips on which the bulk or fabric of a ship can be built or repaired, but, what is still more serious, in the provision of gun-mountings and armaments of those great monsters, those 'dreadnaughts' which are now the dominating type of ship. Such an enormous development, and I will venture to say, being most anxious not to excite anything in the nature of unnecessary alarm in this country, such an enormous development is so serious from our national point of view that we could no longer take to ourselves as we could a year ago with reason the consoling and comforting reflection that we have the advantage in speed and the rate at which ships can be constructed."

The " enormous development " four times emphasized by Mr. Asquith, was a mere figment of the mind of the patriotic Mr. Mulliner. Nevertheless, it shows to what base uses Prime Ministers may be put, and how difficult it will be for the people to grapple with the evils of Jingo imagination. This fact stands out in all the miserable business: the distinct declaration of the German Government was ignored by the British Cabinet, and the myth-spinning Mr. Mulliner was believed instead. Though Admiral von Tirpitz told the Budget Committee of the Reichstag on March 17th, that there would be only 13 ships ready in the autumn of 1912, the British Cabinet figured out the Mulliner acceleration to give Germany 17 ships ready by March, 1912.

Mr. Balfour, who would "o'ertop old Pelion," said 25 ships; or, in any case, 21. Germany had only 13 of these ships in full commission in April, 1914 — *five years* after Mr. Balfour's estimate for three years. Mr. Mulliner had the leaders of the Government and the Opposition scared out of their wits, but Messrs. Asquith, Balfour, and Mulliner were wrong; Admiral von Tirpitz was right. On March 31st, 1912, the Germans had *only nine* dreadnaught battleships and cruisers ready.

Now, what must the German Government have thought of the intentions of the British Government; to whom they had given a declaration which in 1909 was not believed and three years later was proved to have been adhered to in every particular? Did the action of the British Government tend to allay the feeling between the two countries which had already been described by statesmen as extremely dangerous to the peace of Europe?

Animosity, already embittered in a newspaper war extending over at least a continuous period of three years, must have been aggravated beyond all bounds by the events of March, 1909. The solemn warnings of some leaders of political thought in the country had little or no effect on the scaremongers and the armament ring agents. The taxpayers of Britain, and the rest of Europe were groaning under the terrible burden of buying implements of slaughter; in vain, however, they cried to their Governments to reduce expenditure on armies and navies. And the more the people demanded reduction, the more millions the contractors and their agents insisted on spending. Sir Edward Grey, on March 29th, 1909, in the House of Commons, said:

"The great countries of Europe are raising enormous revenues, and something like one-half of them is being spent on military and naval preparations. You may call it national insurance, that is perfectly true; but it is equally true that one-half of the national revenue of the great countries in Europe is being spent on what are, after all, preparations to kill each other. Surely the extent to which this expenditure has grown really becomes a satire and a reflection upon civilization."

Yes, and any Government that permits any Mr. Mulliner to direct its naval policy is a gross satire and a reflection upon democracy. The enormous revenues which Governments have spent during the past eight years on armaments have been attributed largely to the false information spread about the world by panicmongers. Take Mr. Balfour, for instance, who heard the warning of the Foreign Secretary! Only two days after it was delivered, Mr. Balfour went to the Guildhall meeting, attended mainly by shareholders of the armament-ring, and there he did his best to sway the crowd in the direction of forcing the Government to spend more millions on preparations to kill his fellow-men. Mr. Balfour said:

"The Government plan is four ships this year, and the preparation for a possible four ships on April 1st next year. Do these April 1st ships belong to next year's programme, or to this year's programme? If they belong, as I think they ought to belong, to this year's programme, let us put them into this year's programme; but if they are really and genuinely intended to belong to next year's programme, then I ask what your situation will be if you find that next year's programme proper, I mean next year's programme irrespective of the April 1st ships, is itself to consist of eight ships, and I think very likely it will have to consist of

eight ships. That will mean you will attempt to build twelve ships next year against four this year. I call that preposterous."

Preposterous, indeed! But what would be the effect of that speech in Germany? No one there would say "preposterous." They would probably think British ex-Ministers must have gone raving mad when, in the face of the declaration of the German Government, Mr. Balfour could tell city magnates and their clerks that he wanted the Government to build eight battleships that year. Whether the Germans were scared or not, he succeeded in scaring the Government almost out of its senses. In the ensuing months both Mr. Asquith and Sir Edward Grey bowed their head to the storm; and then later Mr. Lloyd George talked about ways and means of raising the money. Mr. Asquith assured his audience at Glasgow, in April, that both he and Sir Edward Grey had given the most explicit pledge to the Commons that, if the necessity should arise, four extra ships would be ordered. Naturally the agents of the armament ring took good care that the necessity would arise.

When Mr. Lloyd George introduced his budget of 1909 he said:

"We do not intend to put in jeopardy the naval supremacy which is essential not only to our national existence, but in our judgment, to the vital interests of western civilization. But, in my judgment, it would also be an act of criminal insanity to throw away eight millions of money, which is so much needed for other purposes, on building gigantic flotillas merely to encounter mythical armadas. That is why we propose only to incur this enormous expenditure when the need for it arises. We

must ensure the complete security of our shores against all real dangers, but we cannot afford to build navies against nightmares. . . . However, as it may be necessary to make arrangements for laying down all the eight dreadnaughts on April 1st, 1910. . . ."

Then when he told the patriots how the money was to be raised — by a tax on land-values — a cry of pain arose from landlords and plutocrats all over the land. One hundred German sixteen-inch guns could not have wrought half the panic among the ruling classes that this Budget did. The cries of "invasion," and "raid," and "another amendment to the German Navy Law," were turned to howls of "confiscation," and "spoliation," and "robbery." All talk of wanting eight dreadnaughts was stilled, and fears of a German invasion were lost in the horrors of having to place a value on land. If the Government of 1906 had that year introduced a Land-values Budget the country would have heard little from the scaremongers,— there is nothing like making patriots pay for what they want. But in 1909 they cried before they were hurt. There was really nothing to fear in the Budget for it had not reached a Committee stage; the Whigs had not got to work on it. And, indeed, when they had re-modelled Mr. Lloyd George's Budget all the vital part of it was destroyed, and the landlords and plutocrats were free to give their attention once more to protecting their acres from a foe they dreaded less than they dreaded the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

The Budget's salutary effect on the scaremongers may be gauged by the tactics of the Opposition. On April 6th, the following notice was issued by the Opposition Whips to the press:

" Arrangements are in rapid progress for the organization after the recess of a great campaign in the country in support of the claim for the immediate building of the four conditional dreadnaughts. The keynote of the agitation is to be found in Mr. Balfour's speech at the Guildhall, on Wednesday last, March 31st:

" ' You must not only have power to build, you must build without delay, without hesitation, without waiting for contingencies, for obscure circumstances, for future necessities. You must build now to meet the present necessity. For, believe me, the necessity is upon you. It is not coming to you in July, or November, or April next; it is on you now. And it is now that you must begin to meet it.' "

The urgency of the campaign in the mind of the author of *The Foundations of Belief,* seemed to be overwhelming. But the Easter recess passed away without any signs of the great campaign. The " immediate need " was forgotten in the throes of the panic caused by the Land-values Budget. So the Opposition postponed indefinitely the inevitable war with Germany; and the energy to be used in making preparations to meet Germany was spent in discharging gardeners, gamekeepers, and footmen, which the terrible Budget could not let them keep. Never a shell-game artist at a country fair reached the limits of buncombe practised by the Opposition in the spring of 1909. It was a roaring farce; — that is, it would have been if Germany had not taken it for tragedy.

The amazing position of a world at peace arming huge battalions and launching great armadas, forced Lord Rosebery to make the following comment:

" Without any tangible reason we see the nations preparing new armaments. They cannot arm any more men

on land, so they have to seek new armaments on sea, piling up these enormous preparations as if for some great Armageddon — and that in the time of profoundest peace. . . . When I see this bursting out of navies everywhere, when I see one country alone asking for 25 millions of extra taxation for warlike preparations, when I see the absolutely unprecedented sacrifices which are asked from us on the same ground, I do begin to feel uneasy at the outcome of it all and wonder where it will stop, or if it is going to bring back Europe into a state of barbarism, or whether it will cause a catastrophe in which the working-men of the world will say, 'we will have no more of this madness, this foolery which is grinding us to powder.'"

Lord Rosebery might then have remembered his criticism of the French Agreement; he might have asked if any secret agreement had been made by the Government with France; he might have asked what Germany thought of the French Government since the signing of the new declaration earlier in that year. What were all the sinister designs in Britain and Europe that caused grave apprehension in Germany? There must have been causes other than panics and scares to force governments to spend so much money on armaments in times of peace. Nations (meaning peoples) had nothing to do with it, for foreign policy was kept from them, and in military and naval affairs the people were usually misinformed. Governments, and governments alone, were responsible. A Continent of governments bound by treaties, ententes, and agreements, all for "the preservation of the peace of Europe," should not be torn by quarrels over sums spent on armies and navies; not if diplomacy were worth a rag-man's bag. But, after all, so long as secret diplomacy seeking peace cannot be carried on without armed support, it

is useless making complaint at the expense of the game. The utter absurdity of the position can be realized at once when our Foreign Secretary was moved to make such a confession of failure as the following:

"We are in comparatively calm weather; we are not in stormy weather in foreign politics at the present moment but the excessive expenditure on armaments makes the weather sultry."

Secret diplomacy keeps the weather comparatively calm, but the armed support of secret diplomacy makes the atmosphere thundery! Was there ever such unmitigated nonsense? "I want to be friendly with my neighbour but he is always so angry when he sees my gun in my hand and the man-trap set in the backyard. Most unreasonable creature!" In the same speech Sir Edward Grey said he agreed with every word Lord Rosebery said on the same question. Agree? Yes,—with anything but the removal of the trap and the gun.

There was another naval debate in the House of Commons in July, 1909, when Mr. Asquith pointed out that there was no other standard by which our programme could be determined than the ship-building facilities and programmes of other nations. He said:

"It is for that reason, and for that reason only, that we are obliged in duty to consider what Germany is doing, what Austria is doing, what Italy is doing, what France is doing —all friendly nations bound to us by ties of intimacy, cordiality, and even affection, and all nations with which I hope we shall never have cause to quarrel."

Apart from the cant of it, why France? And

why not Russia? Did France at that time stand in the same position to Britain as any one of the Powers of the Triple Alliance? Mr. Asquith knew very well she did not. The terms intimacy, cordiality, and affection, were mere literary tinsel tacked on to give a glitter to an otherwise abject apology for not ordering the four "contingent" ships in March according to the Mulliner-Balfour demands. The First Lord of the Admiralty gave the most preposterous reason for building the ships; — and six months later he referred to the scare of the spring of 1909, and said that it had not the slightest foundation in fact.

During the General Election of January, 1910, the way scares were manufactured caused much discussion, and in the flood of oratory which poured from Liberal platforms some pretty severe criticism came from members of the Government. Mr. Churchill, at Leamington, was in fine fighting form:

"They had obtained the services of an Atheist Socialist in order to work up German scares; they had obtained the services of an Anglicized German, Mr. Ellis Barker, whose name used to be Elsbacher, in order to work up a socialist scare; they were going about spending their days decrying British industry, and representing British workmen as a miserable set of broken-down creatures; they utilized their Tory Admiral, Lord Charles Blatchford — he meant Lord Charles Beresford — to electioneer on their behalf by threatening to reveal naval secrets; they clamoured, the whole crowd of them — from the *Daily Mail* downwards — for 16,000 men more to be added to the navy, and they proposed to pay these gallant fellows when they had been enlisted by taxing the bread and meat of their wives. . . . Their leader went about the country labouring to provoke distrust and ill-will with Germany by what, to quote the

fine-cut phrase of the Prime Minister, was the loose private talk of an anonymous tourist."

As the election progressed the Conservatives found it necessary to resort to the navy again for party ammunition. All the old mottoes and "props" used in March, 1909, were taken from the property room and renovated. The Jingoes let themselves go with a vengeance, and their statements reached the high-water mark of infamy. Mr. Burns pointed out how the Jingo press, after the Naval Review, had lauded the navy, and remarked on its magnificent strength. "Now the same newspapers," he said, "talked of a vanished navy and asked if we had a navy at all. There was no language scornful enough to condemn such conduct." Mr. Churchill, at Frome, on January 27th, 1910, had to revert to the campaign of slander of his political opponents:

"The attitude of the Conservative party with regard to the navy has been a disgrace to that party. It was the most contemptible policy ever pursued by a great party; it was a policy of trying to raise a panic without reason, a policy of trying to raise ill-will between two great nations without cause, a policy of decrying and belittling the fleet and trying to get money out of the pockets of the weak and the poor. It was the lowest depths to which any great party had ever sunk."

The denunciation was not a whit too strong. Mr. Balfour seemed to compete with the veriest tub-thumper in out-and-out recklessness. At Haddington, he said: "I understand that the Governments say that we have got a great many ships, and the number is so considerable that we need not fear any

aggression from any other Power. Those ships, of the number of which they boasted, were the ships that we left behind."

The *Times* of January 26th, 1910, gave the following comparison of strength of the naval forces actually in commission in home waters, when Mr. Balfour resigned office, and at the beginning of 1910, when the Liberals entered on the fifth year of office:

	Battle-ships	*First-class Cruisers*	*Smaller Cruisers, Gunboats*
1904	16	13	30
1910	44	37	58

	Destroyers	*Torpedo boats*	*Submarines*
1904	24	16	nil
1910	121	88	59

That was the true position when Mr. Balfour spoke at Haddington, and, if he had taken the ordinary precaution of looking at the figures before the meeting, he must have known that he was not speaking the truth. But the policy of trying to raise ill-will passed all bounds of tub-thumping decency when Mr. Balfour, at Hanley, said:

"Go about at this moment if you will, and consult the statesmen and diplomatists of the lesser Powers, and I am perfectly confident that you will find among them an absolute unanimity of opinion that a struggle sooner or later between this country and Germany is inevitable. I do not agree with them, but that is their opinion. They have watched with the closest interest, but not, I think, always with perfect comprehension, that, to foreigners, most mysterious thing, English public opinion, and they have come to the conclusion, I believe utterly wrongly, that we are not

alive to the sense of our responsibilities, and that nothing can stir us to a recognition of our position, and that, therefore, we are predestined to succumb in some great contest, the occasion for which nobody can foresee, to a country which does face facts, which is alive to its responsibility, and which talks little and does much. And so far has this depreciatory view of the virility of the manhood of Great Britain gone that I have known Germans, not connected with the Government, but men of position and character, men engaged in great affairs, who if you talk to them about the adoption of Tariff Reform by this country, actually say, 'Do you suppose we should ever allow Great Britain to adopt Tariff Reform?' I do not press private and irresponsible conversations more than they ought to be pressed, but the idea of any man of education and character outside this country should have the audacity to say that Great Britain is not to settle its own taxation according to its own ideas, makes my blood boil."

This contemptible exhibition of the "mind-I-don't-believe-it-myself," kind of gossip, led Mr. Lloyd George to say that:

"It is the kind of society tittle-tattle heard at tea-tables where they sandwiched their toast with horrible things about Germany and Radicals, and about their nearest and dearest friends, too. . . . It was not merely the manner and method and style of the worst society scandal-monger of the most cowardly type, but it created bad blood between neighbours."

In such manner the war that was "bound to come," was made to come. The inevitable strife was encouraged in every conceivable way. Money, energy, and brains were not spared in setting up the plant, and in obtaining the raw material, for the manufacture of electioneering goods of a highly inflammable nature. The highest names in the land were

lent to all this despicable trade of making war between two nations. Lord Charles Beresford said, "He did not wish to make the navy a party thing, but one had to get into Parliament somehow." And that was how he got in. To get to St. Stephen's somehow was the main object of the attack, and if relations were strained between the British and German peoples in the attempt then it was an accident of electioneering only to be justified by the defeat of the Government's Land Budget.

After the General Election, magazines and reviews continued to publish articles on naval affairs which drew comparisons between Britain and Germany. No one who followed closely the trend of events could come to any other conclusion but that Germany was the one Power in all Europe we had to arm against. In the summer of 1910, a particularly belligerent class of Jingo in the clubs talked freely of the war that was "bound to come." "Smash 'em now," was the phrase heard in certain quarters. The British amateur Bernhardis, when they were not magnifying the German navy tenfold, were saying the empire had gone to ruin under the management of Messrs. Lloyd George and Company. In the debate in the House of Commons on the navy, July, 1910, Mr. Asquith said:

"There is another point, a very important point, which was raised which I agree is a matter for great regret. I mean that the increase in our naval expenditure should have been associated, in so far as it has been associated, with the notion that we are in any sense hostile to or entertain hostile designs against the friendly nation of Germany. Nothing is further from the truth. I can say with most perfect sincerity that our relations with Germany have

been, and at this moment are, of the most cordial character. I look forward to increasing warmth and fervour and intimacy in those relations year by year. I welcome, as every man on both sides with any sense of true patriotism welcomes, all the various agencies and movements by which the two peoples are getting more and more to understand each other. I do not believe the German Government would in the least subscribe to the view which has been imputed to the German nation in the article just quoted, that our naval preparations are directed against them, any more than I subscribe to the view that the German naval preparations are directed against us. Germany has her own policy to pursue, her own interests to safeguard."

This extraordinary statement was made in a debate which positively reeked with comparisons made against Germany. It was said about twelve months after the Prime Minister preferred the declarations of the unutterable Mulliner to the declaration of the German Chancellor and Admiral von Tirpitz. In the same debate Mr. Asquith gave the British and German figures of the number of dreadnaughts to be ready for war in April, 1913. Britain was to have 25 and Germany 21. What the figures were worth so far as Germany was concerned may be shown by an answer to a question put to Mr. Churchill on March 23, 1914. He then said Germany would have 14 dreadnaughts ready on April 1st, 1914, but on April 22nd the First Lord of the Admiralty reduced the number to 13. It is a strange way to foster confidence and intimacy. Anyway, the Prime Minister's rebuke had little or no effect on the Opposition leader. He went to Glasgow in October, 1910, and there delivered another alarmist speech.

He could not understand why "there should be slips not used, on which no ship is being built," and he said he did "not believe the margin in British strength has ever in our history through the last hundred years — more than a hundred years — sunk so low as that." If Mr. Balfour had taken the trouble to look at the Navy League Annual, published at the time he made the speech, he would have found the position of the two fleets to be as follows:

Dreadnaughts and pre-dreadnaughts.

	1910	*1911*	*1912*	*1913*
British	48	52	60	67
German	22	25	29	37

If the combination of Powers is taken in the same class of ships, it will be seen that Britain and France, without Russia, had an enormous preponderance over the Triple Alliance:

	1910	*1911*	*1912*	*1913*
British and French	63	67	81	88
Germany, Austria, and Italy	34	38	43	48

The marvel of it all was the fact that Mr. Balfour and his friends knew that they could make such statements with impunity. They knew their audiences, and the statements they made on the navy and Germany reflected the standard of intelligence of their political supporters. Yet, notwithstanding the evidence supplied by the Admiralty, the Navy League, and even the *Daily Telegraph,* which in October published an article from "Our Naval Correspondent," showing how German dreadnaught-building had received a serious setback, owing to the Germans learning that we had a new 13.5-in. gun, and that in

consequence "the whole of the preparatory work, which had been practically completed in April last, will now have to be done afresh," Mr. Balfour, at Nottingham, in November, said:

"Whether or not the Government have now awakened out of their sleep, whether or not they do seriously propose to deal with a situation which is full of peril — I know not if they are still slumbering — no matter what charges of partisanship are levelled at us, we will fight for a strong navy."

Never was there a stronger case of increase of appetite growing by what it fed on.

CHAPTER VII

INSURANCE

"MOREOVER, neither should a city be thought happy, nor should a legislator be commended, because he has so trained the people as to conquer their neighbours; for in this there is a great inconvenience; since it is evident that upon this principle every citizen who can will endeavour to procure the supreme power in his own city; which crime the Lacedæmonians accuse Pausanias of, though he enjoyed such great honours. Such reasoning and such laws are neither political, useful, nor true; but a legislator ought to instil those laws on the minds of men which are most useful for them, both in their public and private capacities. The rendering a people fit for war that they may enslave their inferiors, ought not to be the care of the legislator; but that they may not themselves be reduced to slavery by others. In the next place, he should take care that the object of his government is the safety of those who are under it, and not a despotism over all; in the third place, that those only are slaves who are fit to be only so. Reason indeed concurs with experience in showing that all the attention which the legislator pays to the business of war, and all other rules which he lays down, should have for their object rest and peace; since most of those states (which we usually see) are preserved by war, but, after they have acquired a supreme power over those around them, are ruined; for during peace, like a sword, they lose their brightness; the fault of which lies in the legislator, who never taught them how to be at rest."

— Aristotle.

The policy of European naval expansion since the beginning of the century is to be attributed to dis-

trust arising out of secret foreign policy. No one can read the miserable story in all its sequence of diplomatic action, and events of aggression, without seeing clearly how closely allied are the dates of ententes, agreements, secret arrangements between naval and military experts, and the alteration in the German Naval Law. It is true the British and German peoples have during the period been treated to declarations of good-will from the representatives of both Governments, and our Foreign Secretary has returned the fine sentiments of German Chancellors and Admiral von Tirpitz, as to peaceful intentions going hand in hand with naval estimates year by year. In the Commons we have had flowing passages containing assurances of affection; and Ministers have dwelt long in many debates on the perfect understandings between the two Governments as to the protection of interests which would never clash. Dreadnaughts and battalions were the mere adjuncts of colonizing schemes which every great civilizing Power must in these progressive days pursue in the interests of its surplus population. Men who ventured to express their fears of such schemes were by the many set down as "Little Englanders," unimportant persons who could never appreciate the real scheme of empire, owing to their dislike of bloodshed. "Timid, sallow looking wretches," so one paper described them, "with more brain than pluck," who could not understand why the nations should spend more and more on arms for murder while the protests of international love increased. The questions and doubts of these folk were by the Jingoes usually thrust aside as the grumblings of pacifists, who neither knew what love of country meant, nor

ever felt the thrill of joy that all the pomp and circumstance of empire brings to men who think imperially. Germany had a Bernhardi, but Britain had a Bernhardi class, which lived and moved and had its being in war. It thought of nothing else but war, and it was recruited from all sections of society.

We have heard the diplomatist defined as the man who lies abroad for his country's good; but it was not until 1909 Britain discovered the men who did it at home for the same purpose. Those who passed the limits of what was strictly true in 1909, all worked for their country's good. It was their excessive patriotism that forced them to exceed the bounds of decency and truth. But now their supporters will say, "Where would England have been if they had not insisted on a big navy?" This question is already being put to pacifists. But another question might be asked, and it is this: "Should we be now at war with Germany if the infamous Jingo campaign of 1909 had not been waged?" To what extent that campaign of bitterness and hatred against Germany helped to make this war possible no one but those who passed through it can tell. Still, blameable as the Jingoes may be, we all must take our share of responsibility.

The excuses of Ministers for the blunders connected with the estimates for 1909 reached the height of absurdity when the estimates of 1910 were introduced. How were they to know Messrs. Mulliner and Company were wrong? and Admiral von Tirpitz and the manager of Krupps were right? How were the Cabinet to know the real reason for the changes in the German Naval Law? Mr. McKenna in March, 1911, told the House that the

German Fleet Law came into existence in 1905, the year before the Liberals took office, and that Germany then spent only £11,000,000 on her navy; but since that time there had been two alterations of a very drastic character which called for an expenditure of £22,000,000, in 1911. From that statement the man in the street had to infer that the Germans forced the pace in the armament race without the slightest provocation from us. In how many debates on naval estimates have members on both sides of the House argued that Germany, and Germany alone, was to blame for all the excessive expenditure on armaments because she had altered her Naval Law? So many people have accepted this reason as the only one that it might be well now to see what there is in it. The dates on which the German Naval Law was amended were June 5th, 1906, and April 18th, 1908. The alteration of June, 1906, increased the number of large cruisers to be built under the Fleet Law by six; that of April, 1908, increased the number of battleships by four. Now, no definite reason has ever been given by Foreign Secretary, or First Lord, or Prime Minister, for the changes in the German Naval Law. If questions had been put to Ministers on this point it is quite possible no answer would have been given. For several years only four members of the Cabinet could have given a proper answer. After the death of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman only three Ministers knew the real reason for the alteration in the German Naval Law, until, perhaps, the spring of 1912. When the Cabinet as a whole learned the answer to that question is not known publicly, but the approximate date can be guessed without much compunction.

Early in 1908 there were rumours of a disquieting nature about the departments connected with the Foreign Office, the Admiralty, and the War Office; that we were committed to the obligations of war in case France were attacked by a third Power. Since that time many military, naval, and Foreign Office men have known pretty accurately to what extent we were committed; but not until we were on the very verge of a European calamity was the public taken into the confidence of the Cabinet and told the true reason for all the armament troubles and international anxieties which have affected us since 1906. The Foreign Secretary in his speech in the House, on August 3rd, 1914, revealed the secret which had been marvellously well kept from the general public for eight years and a half; that in January, 1906, he had authorized conversations between British and French naval and military experts to take place, and that he had spoken to Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, Mr. Asquith, and Mr. Haldane about it, and had received their sanction.

From the time of the commencement of the German Naval Law until the Liberals came into office in 1906, there can be no doubt as to who forced the pace. In battleships alone our superiority in 1901 was 112 per cent., in 1902 it was 120 per cent., in 1903 it was 165 per cent., and in 1904 it went up to 190 per cent. Taking the five years before the German Naval Law came into existence, we find the expenditure on the British navy, under Mr. Goschen, increased by about £10,000,000. In introducing his last naval Budget, Mr. Goschen told the House in 1900 that Germany was starting a programme of shipbuilding at a cost of £70,000,000, to be spread

over a period of sixteen years. The rise in expenditure during the first five years of the German Naval Law does not show any evidence of Germany forcing the pace. In 1900 Britain spent £32,055,000, and Germany spent £7,472,000; in 1904 Britain spent £42,431,000, and Germany £11,659,000. Another test in expenditure, the three Power test, shows that in 1900 Britain spent £1,110,000 more than Germany, France and Russia combined; and in 1904 Britain spent £6,360,000 more than the same three Power combination. The first dreadnaught was built by Britain in 1904–5, and the work was completed in thirteen months. Bombastically our papers announced to the world that we had created a revolution in shipbuilding, and had practically made scrap of most of the big ships of other Powers.

The first alteration in the German Naval Law was made on June 5th, 1906, about six months after the agreement between the British and French Governments authorizing conversations to take place between naval and military experts. After January, 1906, the tendency of the figures is startling. The combination of Britain and France under naval and military experts, coming shortly after the Delcassé interview in *Le Gaulois,* and the Lauzanne revelations in *Le Matin,* in October, 1905, forced Germany to alter her Naval Law. The effect of the combination against Germany is remarkable. In 1906 Britain reduced her naval expenditure by £1,679,754, and France increased her amount by £255,275; Germany raised her expenditure by £704,501. The next year, 1907, Britain reduced her estimates by £52,587; and France also reduced her expenditure by £516,445; Germany raised her estimates by £1,618,053. Then,

in 1908, Britain increased the amount spent on the navy by £900,000, and France also raised her expenditure, by £310,515; Germany then increased her naval expenditure by £2,972,637. The net result of the authorization of conversations between the British and French naval and military experts was to force Germany to raise her expenditure on her navy by £5,295,191 in three years. The work of isolation was begun, and Germany set about making full preparations for meeting her " peaceful " neighbours east and west.

The second alteration of the German Naval Law took place on April 18th, 1908. The reasons for the second change in the Naval Law are not far to seek. German naval experts now held that they would have to reckon in future with Great Britain, France, and Russia. Speaking on the naval programmes of great Powers, Sir Edward Grey, in January, 1908, said:

" When I see the great programmes of naval expenditure which are being produced in some other countries, I think it right that the attention of this country should be devoted to these programmes, because if they are carried out in their entirety it will undoubtedly become necessary for us in the interests, not of the Empire, but for the preservation of our independence and for our own safety at home to make further increases in our own navy."

Now the only great Power he could have had in mind was Germany. France was out of the question and Russia was not a Power we could then count against us. If the Foreign Secretary had other Powers than Germany in mind they must have been those of the Triple Alliance. He knew when he made that speech that the military and naval experts

of France and Britain were then formulating plans for the General Staffs; and he must have known the real reasons for Germany's naval expansion since 1906. The speech was really a feeler; it was the Foreign Secretary's way of preparing Liberals in the country for a change of naval policy. It was his way of covering up the blunder he made in 1906, and screening the work of his department, together with the plans of the experts; and throwing the blame of expansion in armaments on Germany, the victim of our Foreign Office policy of secrecy. When one thinks of the way the general public, and indeed leading Liberals, have been misled in these affairs since 1906, it is in itself enough to make any thinking person an anarchist. Governments that cannot be straightforward with a people to whom they are only servants,— because the systems at the Admiralty and the Foreign Office are based on secrecy,— should at least be honest about the difficulties which secret systems raise; and should inform the public as to the dangers and disabilities which make true representative government impossible, and peace a system of grinding taxation.

In the autumn of 1907 Britain concluded an agreement with Russia. Both Governments engaged to respect the integrity and independence of Persia; they declared that they had no intention of changing the political status of Afghanistan; and they contracted to respect the territorial integrity of Tibet. This agreement removed many of the old contentions which lay between Britain and Russia. Taken with the policy of isolating Germany, it was not calculated to mollify the German Government. Besides, Russia was the ally of France. Nevertheless, the Ger-

man Emperor visited London in the autumn of 1907, and was a guest at the Guildhall. On that occasion the Emperor gave an emphatic and impressive declaration, to use Mr. Asquith's words, that the governing purpose of his policy was the preservation of the peace of Europe, and the maintenance of good relations between our two countries. A people never knows quite where it stands internationally so long as there is only one royal family in Europe, and it certainly perplexed many sober citizens to learn that the potentate which caused Britain so much anxiety in 1905 was enjoying city hospitality in 1907. It was puzzling. But stranger events were soon to happen.

On March 6th, 1908, there appeared in the *Times* the following letter from its military correspondent, under the title, " Under which King? ":

" I consider it my duty to ask you to draw the attention of the public to a matter of grave importance. It has come to my knowledge that His Majesty the German Emperor has recently addressed a letter to Lord Tweedmouth on the subject of British and German naval policy, and it is affirmed that this letter amounts to an attempt to influence, in German interests, the Minister responsible for our Navy Estimates."

This was too much for the Jingoes. It was one thing inviting the German Emperor to sample our turtle, but quite another when he invited the First Lord of the Admiralty to reduce the naval estimates. Outraged Jingoes rose to the occasion with unprecedented alacrity. The question was raised in the House of Lords, and Lord Rosebery intervened in the debate to defend Lord Tweedmouth from the bitter attacks of the Yellow press. He said:

"I gather from the newspapers, which seem to have been singularly well-informed of late, that the German Emperor was somewhat disquieted by a letter which appeared in the public prints, in which very pointed note was taken of himself. And if I am still to believe the public prints, he wrote a letter, partly of banter, to my noble friend the First Lord of the Admiralty on this subject, to which my noble friend replied, in, I suppose, as much a tone of banter as one in his situation can employ towards such a potentate as the German Emperor. Out of this we have seen a whole world of absolutely insane inferences drawn — that the German Emperor was attempting to influence my noble friend, with a view to cut down the Navy Estimates, to check the progression of our armaments, to neutralize the defensive activities of our nation, and in some subterranean manner to subvert the whole constitution of the British Government. Surely that is placing ourselves, our Government, our institutions, in a supremely ridiculous position. . . . What then is the lesson I draw from the excitement produced by this very slight incident? It is this — that the responsibility of the press both in England and Germany should be realized by that press, and that they should not lash both nations into a state of soreness which some day may amount to exasperation and may produce the gravest dangers to European peace."

A copy of the Kaiser's letter has recently appeared in a London journal, and there is not one word in it to justify the statement made by the *Times* correspondent. It in no way attempts to influence the naval plans of our Admiralty. What the letter contains is a protest against scaremongers in high quarters; and, in all fairness to the German Emperor, it must be said he had very good reason to protest. The following paragraphs from the letter indicate the character of the whole of it:

"During my last pleasant visit to your hospitable shores I tried to make your authorities understand what the drift of the German Naval Policy is. But I am afraid that my explanations have been either misunderstood or not believed, because I see the 'German Danger' and the 'German Challenge to British Naval Supremacy' constantly quoted in the different articles. The phrase, if not repudiated or corrected, sown broadcast over the country and daily dinned into British ears, might in the end create most deplorable results. . . . It is absolutely nonsensical and untrue that the German Naval Bill is to provide a Navy meant as a 'challenge to British Naval Supremacy.'

"It is very galling to the Germans to see their country continually held up as the sole danger and menace to Britain by the whole press of the different contending parties; considering that other countries are building too, and there are even larger fleets than the German. Doubtless when party faction runs high there is often a lamentable lack of discrimination in the choice of the weapons; but I really must protest that the 'German Naval Programme' should be the only one for exclusive use, or that such a poisoned one should be forged as the 'German Challenge to British Supremacy at Sea.'"

Now when this letter was published some editorial paragraphs accompanied it, in which the following statement was made:

"At the same time, the Imperial German Navy was making swift and steady progress; and its menace to British supremacy aroused considerable alarm in this country. Although the British navy held a superiority over the German navy in ships not of the 'dreadnaught' type, the balance in 'dreadnaughts' was virtually even."

Virtually even! Let us see. The sentences refer to the naval situation as it was at the time the Kaiser wrote to Lord Tweedmouth, February 14th, 1908.

Britain had then four dreadnaughts, and Germany had not one. Will it be believed in the face of that statement from a London penny paper, published October 30th, 1914, that we had seven dreadnaughts afloat before Germany had one ready for sea? That is just the kind of stuff the scares were made of. But to return to Lord Rosebery's statement about the Kaiser's letter.

The yellow press took little heed of his ominous words. Any bit of club-room gossip was gathered for Jingo fuel, and the campaign of envy and hatred pushed for all it was worth in both Britain and Germany. In the House of Commons the pacifists raised a debate on the motion of Mr. Murray Macdonald to reduce expenditure on armaments, but it was defeated by 320 to 73. The navy estimates were introduced on March 9th, the same day the Kaiser-Tweedmouth letters were discussed in the Lords, and revealed an increase of £900,000. Mr. Balfour raised at once the question of German superiority, which only existed in his imagination, and laid the basis of the scare which culminated in the orgy of mendacity of March, 1909.

After the estimates of 1908, the policy of reducing naval armaments was buried, and time was beginning to show that Continental friendships were expensive affairs for Britain to indulge in. But what else could be expected? After the death of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, the Whigs got control of the Cabinet. Peace was in doubt. Retrenchment was blown to the winds, and Reform turned into socialistic channels. The old watchwords of Liberalism were dropped, and the Gladstonian tags fitted no perorations. An effective Opposition could have made po-

litical hay of the Government, but, torn with internal dissension, it languished inept and fatuous. The future looked dark for democracy with the Cabinet assuming more power, the rights of private members disappearing, the doings of the Foreign Office becoming more and more shrouded in mystery, and the growth of influence of armaments rings over the Admiralty and the War Office. The redeeming features after 1908, were the Budget of 1909, and the Parliament Act.

In looking back, no one with an impartial eye can detect any other course open to the governments but one of increasing expenditure on armies and navies. Agreements with France, and Russia, and Japan, to say nothing of all the other serious aggravations referred to by Ministers in their speeches over and over again, could have no other result in Europe than arming the nations for Armageddon. The more agreements we made, the more Germany became impressed with the fact that she was the one Power in all the world Britain was arming against. Her press from the summer of 1909, scarcely ever ceased from pointing that out to the German people. When the scare of 1908 was at its height, Ministers here protested they had no intention of trying to isolate Germany; but it was too late. Leading French publicists said the opposite; many of them frankly condemned the policy of the Entente which had the effect of isolating Germany. Sir Edward Grey, who was responsible for our making so many friendships, tried to make the country believe that the Government had no designs against Germany when they drew up agreements with Russia and France. Yet on April 1st, 1908, before the German Naval Law

was amended for the second time, the navies of Britain, France and Germany stood as follows:

	Battleships	*Armoured Cruisers*	*Destroyers*
Great Britain	57	34	142
France	21	19	48
Germany	22	8	61

How could any German, whether educated by Kant or Nietzsche, in the face of these figures listen for a moment to the amiable phrases of the Foreign Secretary about there being no desire on the part of Britain to isolate Germany? Germans, generally, could not possibly believe that there was no intention on the part of a large section of the British press and people, in the spring of 1909, to isolate their country. Ministers have always striven to keep the public mind fixed on British and German naval development only, just as if Britain stood in her old position of splendid isolation. It would not have suited the Foreign Office game to let the people know that our understandings with France and Russia seriously affected the naval programmes of Germany. It had been said that the only reason why Germany altered her Naval Law in 1908, was for the purpose of providing work for her dockyards where trade was almost at a standstill, and the workers were on the point of rioting. It is true, trade was exceeding bad in Germany in 1907, and 1908. But the German Government was not as philanthropic as all that. More likely the big firms demanded more orders, as they did in Britain, and their demands fitted in with foreign and naval policy. Anyway, the alteration of the German Naval Law did not make enough differ-

ence to scare the wits out of our Jingoes and the Government. Without a Naval Law, the Entente Powers, from the time of the big scare, 1909, up to this year, simply smothered all Germany's attempts to become mistress of the sea. The figures of new construction from 1909 to 1914 will never convince any German that our policy was other than one of complete isolation:

	Great Britain	*France*	*Russia*	*Germany*
1909	£11,076,551	£ 4,517,766	£ 1,758,487	£10,177,062
1910	14,755,289	4,977,682	1,424,013	11,392,856
1911	15,148,171	5,876,659	3,216,396	11,710,859
1912	16,132,558	7,114,876	6,897,580	11,491,187
1913	16,883,875	8,893,064	12,082,516	11,010,883
1914	18,676,080	11,772,862	13,098,613	10,316,264

These figures speak volumes. They tell their own story of isolation. The rise in the expenditure of the French and Russian Governments on their navies is seen to be stupendous. And while the patriot is thinking about foreign friendships it might be well to give a thought in passing to the armament ring of Great Britain, to Messrs. Schneider, and to Messrs. Krupp, and figure up what they were getting out of the wholesale trade of murdering millions. Talk about big business! These four countries in one year spend over £50,000,000 on new construction alone. Ten per cent. of it makes a tidy dividend for large numbers of " apostles of peace." Jingoism is the best and biggest business on the two continents.

Now, no fair-minded Britisher can look at the figures and say that they prove in the slightest degree that Germany intended to smash Britain. The wildest notions of German naval expansion have been sedulously sown in this country for years. Since Mr. Balfour's pilgrimage in 1909, it is not surprising to hear men, usually well-informed in civil matters, say

that the " Germans are spending many millions more on their navy than we are on ours." But that is one of the tricks of the trade, for the agents of war know their public, and a certain class of patriot as a rule will believe any yarn told by a Lord or a front-bench man.

Is it too much to ask those people who insist on saying Germany provoked this war to " smash us," to try to place themselves in the position of an intelligent German, one sufficiently interested in foreign affairs to inquire what France and Russia, two countries allied against Germany, were spending on their navies; and then say Germany was wholly responsible for the European conflagration? It is the fashion now to try to focus public attention on the White Papers, just as it was for Ministers to keep the public mind bent on Germany's navy; but White Papers record only mere incidents in this affair; they deal with only a little of the doings of diplomatists. This business began before Sir Edward Grey went to the Foreign Office. Our White Paper in itself is only useful for salving the consciences of well-meaning Christians. There is a lot of history connected with this war not to be found anywhere in any White Paper.

Think of the German who knew about the secret articles to the Anglo-French Agreement; who remembered the 1905 scandal connected with the alleged Schleswig-Holstein invasion by the British in support of France; who had a lively recollection of the work of M. Delcassé; and who, in the spring of this year, saw the figures of France's new construction raised from £4,977,682 in 1910 to £11,772,862 in 1914; — and then imagine his feelings when he

read British Ministers' statements about having no desire to isolate Germany. It is all very well for the man who is engrossed in the politics of his own country to say, "Germany forced the pace!" to say, "Germany meant to smash us," and "It was bound to come, and the sooner the better." But surely in the name of all that is reasonable, for the future guidance of the people, for the welfare of the democracies statesmen now prate so much about, is it not of the greatest importance that the people should learn the full lesson of what foreign policy and the armed support of that policy means? It is of course useless to talk about the Golden Rule while Christian nations are busy making an abattoir of Europe, but it should be possible for thinking men and women, for a moment or two, to put themselves in the shoes of a fellow-German. Try it for a moment. Forget Bernhardi, Nietzsche, and all that British literary giants, scientists, and theologians, have said about them. Then think of Russia, and all Russia meant to a German. A man who lived through the Crimean War can appreciate what that means. Perhaps it is quite impossible for one of us to feel what a German would feel on seeing the Russian figures for new construction: in 1910 Russia spent £1,424,013, and in 1914 she spends £13,098,613! Now look at the figures of the two great combinations, the Triple Alliance and the Triple Entente:

NEW CONSTRUCTION, 1914

Triple Entente		*Triple Alliance*	
Great Britain	£18,676,080	Germany	£10,316,264
France	11,772,862	Austria	4,051,976
Russia	13,098,613	Italy	3,237,000
Triple Entente	£43,547,555	Triple Alliance	£17,605,240

The pacific intentions of the Entente Powers amounted to a two and a half Power standard at least. It must be plain that no assurances of the peaceful intentions of Britain, or the Entente Powers, could, at any time since the death of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, carry the slightest influence in Germany against the actions of our Foreign Office. The preparations for this war were in the making shortly after the festivities of Toulon and Kronstadt, and the Anglo-French Agreement of 1904 was the first step Britain took in the diplomatic game of isolating Germany.

The debate in the House in March, 1911, contained some striking statements from Ministers. The First Lord had to admit he was completely misled in 1909. The facts were right, but the inferences were wrong. The German Government was quite right as to their programme; no acceleration was to take place. It was Britain, not Germany, that was guilty of acceleration. Mr. McKenna said the effect of building the four contingent ships of 1909, "has merely accelerated the date of completion by a couple of years of two of the ships, and will have incidentally the effect of relieving the estimates in the year afterwards." No relief came to justify that statement. The expenditure went up higher and higher each year. Both the gross expenditure, and the money for new construction went up by leaps and bounds after 1909. Sir Edward Grey described the situation with a humour of which he was quite unconscious:

"Before I speak strongly on that point (the evil of increasing expenditure on armaments) I should be misleading the honourable member and the House if because I speak and

feel strongly on that point I gave any impression that the Navy Estimates now before the House were more than the Government think is necessary to meet the requirements of the case this year. The First Lord has had a very difficult task. He has had to stand against panic and scare, notably in the election before last, greatly fomented by the calculations made by the right honourable gentleman (Mr. Balfour) which, when the calculations proved to be mistaken disappeared. . . . We certainly, I think, cannot be accused of having forced the pace. Our Navy Estimates for 1909 are said to have given provocation. They have not given rise to increased naval expenditure in Germany, or, I believe, in any other country. The last addition to the German Naval programme was settled by law in 1908."

The Foreign Secretary did not know of increased naval expenditure in Germany, or in any other country; but it was necessary for Britain to introduce estimates showing an increase of nearly £4,000,000. Yet no one could accuse Britain of forcing the pace! The Foreign Secretary made that statement in the House on the very day when the First Lord said the alteration of the German Naval Law was the cause of our raising our expenditure. The debate was full of instruction as to the value of panics, and the statement of the Jingo press and armament ring agents.

In April, 1911, there was a debate in the House of Lords on Compulsory Military Service. Lord Roberts led the attack on the voluntary system. Lord Haldane, who was told in 1906 of the secret arrangement for conversations to take place between British and French military and naval experts, replied, and let some light fall on the international situation, in a passage the significance of which has been overlooked. He said:

"The German Chancellor, in a speech to which the noble earl referred, spoke of the willingness of his country to exchange naval information with this country, a course which, if taken, must tend in some degree to reduce the risk of scares, which have done so much to force up the naval estimates, not only in this country, but in other countries. Moreover, with France and Russia we are in agreement, and a war in defence of the Indian frontier against Russia appears less likely now than it has appeared for generations. . . . I have always thought that the true Commander of the Forces in this country, naval and military, is not the sailor or the soldier, but the Foreign Secretary."

It is evident, now that we have the figures for expenditure, that the invitation of the German Chancellor was not accepted. His "solemn declaration" of 1909 was ignored, and a panic "without foundation in fact" was the factor that did "so much to force up the naval estimates." Still the chief point of interest in Lord Haldane's extraordinary speech was the admission that we were in agreement with both France and Russia, and the inference to be drawn is that there was no necessity for arming against those countries. Speeches delivered in the House of Lords do not at best receive the attention from the press and from the public they deserve. They do, however, engage the attention of diplomatists and legislators in foreign countries, and the fact that Lord Haldane regarded the Foreign Secretary as Commander of the Forces must have occasioned no small surprise on the Continent.

The Moroccan trouble in the summer of 1911 brought Germany and Britain to the verge of war. A little bit of a German gunboat, the *Panther,* visited Agadir, and scared the British Empire out of its

wits. As for the *Panther,* the press soon made leviathan out of a herring. In all the sordid history of British Foreign Office deals, there is nothing so unutterably discreditable as the business connected with the Agadir incident. Germany was a party to the Act of Algeciras of 1906, a "scrap of paper" containing 123 articles, which confirmed the pledges of the Powers to uphold the independence and integrity of Morocco. The separate Franco-German declaration of February, 1909, has already been referred to; and the secret articles to which Britain was an accomplice, whereby Spain and France were to partition Morocco, it must be remembered, were not made public until November after the visit of the *Panther* to Agadir. Now the real reason for the appearance of the *Panther* at Agadir was this: Germany saw France occupy Fez, with the intention of staying there; and Spain in occupation of El-Kasr and Larash; both countries having tens of thousands of soldiers spread over the northern districts of Morocco. Therefore, as a party to the Algeciras Act, and as a partner of France, in the Declaration of 1909, she was not inclined to stand aloof while France and Spain partitioned Morocco. Sir Edward Grey admitted in the House that he was in favour of the French descent on Fez; but he, of course, would give no reason why he approved the French expedition. Secret articles, and backstairs understandings, placed the British Government in an unenviable position. That the whole of our naval and military forces should, because of the commitments of the Foreign Office, be placed at the disposal of French, and Spanish, and British gangs of concessionaires, land-grabbers, and financial sharks,

operating in and about European foreign offices, was to say the least an abominable act of treachery to the people. And that Mr. Lloyd George should lend himself to that kind of work is enough to make one despair of trusting any Radical, once he enters a Cabinet. What would he have said of the business if he had been in Opposition! If Lord Lansdowne, say, had been Foreign Secretary, what would Mr. Lloyd George have said of a British Government lending its naval, military and diplomatic strength to those who made of northern Africa what Belgium made of the Congo?

CHAPTER VIII

APOSTLES OF PEACE

"THAT friendly relations may ultimately be established between England and Germany without the arbitrament of war I earnestly hope and occasionally believe. It depends mainly on the English people. They must not allow themselves to rest in self-complacency, nor, in ignorant nervousness as to the susceptibilities of foreign powers, slacken their efforts to increase the present power of the navy. They must, moreover, insist on military reforms absolutely necessary if England is to maintain her place among the nations, and that the destinies of this country shall be in the hands of persons acquainted with the march of opinion and with the strength and tendency of political forces in the leading countries of Europe. Those who counsel Englishmen to be vigilant in these matters are true Apostles of Peace. England and Germany will never be brought together until the Germans thoroughly realize that there is no hope of substituting as the symbol of sea power the German eagle for the white ensign of the British Navy."

— Sir Rowland Blennerhassett
in *The National Review,* December, 1903.

It has been said that every politician sooner or later must eat his own words and swallow his own principles. The exigencies of party warfare demand metamorphosis at some stage or another; nothing is more potent in bringing these changes about than office; it is the sarcophagus of the idealist. A man may be never so firm in his principles

when he is a private member; but once he is taken within the walls of a Government department the lime of it seems to eat through him and petrify his soul. The House itself is bad enough in this respect, and it has been called, not without reason, the mausoleum of ideals. But a private member need not vote unless he likes; he might support his party in some legislation and vote against it on measures he objects to, or not vote at all. It is different when a man takes office; he must conform to the tradition of the department or resign his post. Few resign, voluntarily. The attractions outweigh the shock one's principles must undergo. The "slings and arrows" of criticism from an Opposition press may be hard to bear, but there are only between fifty or sixty posts of honour in the Government, and opportunity comes but once to the young man without lineage or a safe seat. Ambition nursing an ideal on a back-bench, stirred by the vigour of its principles, murmurs to it, "it will not be so with thee." That is what "makes calamity of so long life." We bear the ills of office, rather than fly to others we know not of.

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After the machinations of our Foreign Office in 1911, Germany could have no doubt at all that the policy of the Entente Powers was to isolate Germany by any means and at all costs. There were in the autumn of 1911 men in France who did not hesitate to speak severely on the question of isolating Germany, though leading statesmen in England denied the charge in vain. Our naval policy dictated by the "Commander of the Forces," no doubt, was continued by Mr. Churchill when he was made

First Lord and in one of the first speeches he delivered after he took charge of the navy, he said:

"Our naval preparations are necessarily based upon the naval preparations of other Powers. . . . Next year the Naval Law . . . prescribes that the limit of expansion has been reached, and that the annual quota of new ships added to the German navy will fall to half the quota of recent years. Hitherto that law, as fixed by Parliament has not been in any way exceeded, and I gladly bear witness to the fact that the statements of the German Ministers about it have been strictly borne out by events. Such is the state of affairs in the world to-day that the mere observance of that law, without an increase, would come to Europe as a great and sensible relief."

Again we have it from a Minister that the German Government kept strictly to the letter of their declaration and did not accelerate building; but the old bogey of basing our policy on the preparations made by other Powers is laid down again by the new First Lord. After the admission of Lord Haldane that we were in agreement with France and Russia, it would have been more straightforward to have said our naval policy is based on the preparations of Germany, or the Triple Alliance. The Admiralty however stuck to the keep-it-dark policy of the Foreign Office. In both departments secrecy was essential for the needs of the "experts," no matter how inimical that policy might be to the interests of the people. Still it was like getting money out of the taxpayer under false pretences. First scare him to death, and then rob him. And the policy is not to be excused because it may be said that the taxpayer seemed to like it; nor is it to be forgiven because the fleets of the Triple Alliance are com-

paratively idle at present. What must be considered is to what extent that policy fostered international hatred and strife. Look at the figures for 1911 and 1912, and see the way the game was worked:

NEW CONSTRUCTION OF ENTENTE POWERS AND TRIPLE ALLIANCE

	1911	*1912*
Great Britain	£15,148,171	£16,132,558
France	5,876,659	7,114,876
Russia	3,216,396	6,897,580
	£24,241,226	£30,145,014
Germany	£11,710,859	£11,491,187
Italy	2,677,302	3,227,000
Austria	3,125,000	5,114,206
	£17,513,161	£19,832,393

So basing our naval preparations on the naval preparations of other Powers could have no other meaning in practice than working in with France and Russia against the preparations of the Triple Alliance. When the latter showed an increase of £2,319,232, it was necessary for our preparations to be increased by £5,903,788, for one year. But the public are not supposed to know that the preparations of France and Russia have always been regarded by Germany as the chief factors governing her naval policy.

The debates in the House of Commons and the House of Lords on the Moroccan trouble were notable in many respects. Mr. John Dillon's criticism of the actions of the Foreign Office was one of the most brilliant pieces of denunciation heard in the House for many a day. Even so, the public stood outside, oblivious of its meaning to them.

Their attitude might be summed up in the cry of the man, at a political meeting in the North, who said, "To hell with Foreign Affairs,— when am I going to get thirty bob a week?" There is, however, a passage in Mr. Dillon's speech which must be remembered:

"I do not believe any representative assembly in the history of the world has ever been called upon to discuss a matter so vital and so far-reaching as that which the House of Commons has before it to-day to consider, and with so absolute a lack of information. This present discussion in this respect beats all records. The House was summoned for this discussion to-day without any papers whatsoever. What is it that the House ought to have had before we were asked to embark on this discussion? We ought to have had a *Blue Book* containing the diplomatic history of the Moroccan question, including the secret treaty with Spain. The Algeciras Act has already been published. I refer to the secret treaty with Spain, published for the first time the other day, and which the Foreign Minister of France declared three weeks ago he had never heard of, and was not aware of the existence of a treaty to which this country was a party. We should have had the text of the German Agreement of 1909, with an explanation of how it came about that France jockeyed Germany in regard to that agreement, and withdrew from carrying into effect — a matter that was one of the immediate causes of the recent friction. We ought at all events to have had an account of diplomatic correspondence between the four great Powers intimately interested in the question of Morocco, as is customary to be given to the House of Commons on such an occasion. This would have enabled members of the House before the debate commenced, to form a really well-grounded judgment upon the whole matter. We have heard a good deal to-night of the secrecy of the Foreign policy of this country. It is no use attempting to deny it. Those

of us who have been a long time in this House, and can remember the methods of the Foreign Office twenty-five years ago, know as a matter of fact, which cannot be successfully denied, that the Foreign Office policy has become during the last ten years progressively more secret every year. Until this present year this has gone on, when the intense pressure of Foreign Affairs and the danger of war has forced the hands of the Minister to give some time for the discussion of Foreign Office affairs. For ten years the Foreign policy of this country has been conducted behind an elaborate screen of secrecy. Some of us pointed out years ago that the secrecy of Foreign Affairs was the inevitable and logical result of that new departure which was heralded about ten years ago, and which we heard praised once more on the floor of this House to-night. I refer to what is known as the policy of the continuity of the Foreign policy of this country; of the withdrawal of the Foreign policy of this country from the sphere of party politics."

Mr. Dillon might have thanked his stars that he got as much as he did, for if the Paris papers, *Le Temps* and *Le Matin,* had not published the secret articles for the partition of Morocco between Spain and France, precious little information would have been volunteered on the subject by the Foreign Secretary. There was a passage in the speech of the Foreign Secretary that should be noted; for it indicates his attitude of mind towards Germany, and, indeed, shows how utterly futile it was, while such sentiments were expressed, to try to make Germans believe that the policy of our Foreign Office aimed at anything else than isolation. Sir Edward Grey said:

"One does not make new friendships worth having by deserting old ones. New friendships by all means let us make, but not at the expense of the ones which we have.

I desire to do all I can to improve the relations with Germany, as I shall presently show. But the friendships which we have, have lasted now some years, and it must be a cardinal point of improvement of relations with Germany that we do not sacrifice one of those. And what I desire and what I hope may be possible, though it may seem difficult at the present time, is that the improved relations may be such as will improve not only ourselves, but those who are our friends."

The warmth of the proposal must have chilled the lady to the marrow. And this after all the indignity and contumely thrust on Germany by our Foreign Office since 1904! No one who cares to look at the speeches of the Foreign Secretary in and out of the House, could deny that his consistently frigid overtures to Germany for "affection" and "friendship" was one of the chief features of his administration. What hope was there of better relations with our own stock when we were in diplomatic agreement with Germany's ancient foes, France and Russia? Would the Foreign Secretary say the Franco-Russian Alliance helped in any way to bring about improved relations with Germany? Why talk about making new friendships by deserting old ones, when the policy of making the old ones was the cause of limiting the number of new ones?

Mr. Bonar Law, the new leader of the Opposition, in striking contrast to the speech of Sir Edward Grey, referred to Germany with warmth:

"It is an idea prevalent, especially on the Continent, that there is in this country a feeling of hostility to Germany. In my opinion that belief is entirely unfounded. So far as I am concerned — the House will acquit me of egotism in

making these remarks; I am making them not only because I happen to be the leader of the party behind me, but also because I think I can express the view of the great mass of our countrymen — so far as I am concerned, I never had, and certainly have not now, any such feeling. During my business life I had daily commercial intercourse with Germany. I have many German friends, I love some German books almost as much as our favourites in our own tongue, and I can imagine few, if any, calamities which would seem so great as a war, whatever the result, between us and the great German people. I hear it also constantly said — there is no use shutting our eyes and ears to obvious facts — that owing to divergent interests, war some day or other between this country and Germany is inevitable. I never believe in these inevitable wars. . . . If, therefore, war should ever come between these two countries, which heaven forbid, it will not, I think, be due to irresistible natural laws. It will be due to the want of human wisdom."

He might have added, all wars are due to want of human wisdom. War begins where wisdom ends. Lord Morley, in the House of Lords, in the Moroccan debate, contributed a fine passage on Germany's position in the world of art, science, and literature:

"Whether France, or Italy, or Germany, or England has made the greatest contribution in the history of modern civilization — however that speculative controversy may be settled, this at least is certain, that those are not wrong who hold that Germany's high and strict standard of competency, the purity and vigour of her administration of affairs, her splendid efforts and great success in all branches of science, her glories — for glories they are — in art and literature, and the strength and character and duty in the German people entitle her national ideals to a supreme place among the greatest ideals which now animate and guide the world.

Do not let us forget all that. German ambition is a perfectly intelligible and even lofty ambition. Who can wonder that a community which has made the enormous advances in every field that Germany has made, certainly since 1866, in maritime power and wealth and population, should desire to find territories where her surplus population may emigrate and establish themselves without losing either their nationality or their ideals of modern life. There is the place in the sun. In all these great achievements I have ventured to enumerate there is the German place in the sun."

It is so strange nowadays to think that any responsible statesman ever held such views. Lord Morley must have heard of Treitschke and Nietzsche, to say nothing of all the other poisoners of the German mind. *Thus Spake Zarathustra* was published long before Lord Morley spoke that day in the Lords. Prussian militarism was not unknown in 1911, and what Bismarck had said was no Foreign Office secret. Let us hope that Lord Morley knows the whole truth of the matter now that he has had an opportunity of reading the British newspapers since the beginning of the war. But then he might quote from his own *Aphorisms* that, "People who get their wisdom out of books are like those who have got their knowledge of a country from the descriptions of travellers. Truth that has been picked up from books only sticks to us like an artificial limb, or a false tooth, or a rhinoplastic nose; the truth we have acquired by our own thinking is like the natural member."

Early in January, 1912, the fateful year, Lord Rosebery spoke on Foreign Affairs at Glasgow. He was no lover of the Franco-British Agreement.

In Glasgow, after six years of Liberal foreign policy, he said:

"This we do know about our foreign policy, that, for good or for evil, we are now embraced in the midst of the Continental system. That I regard as perhaps the gravest fact in the later portion of my life. We are, for good or for evil, involved in a Continental system, the merits of which I do not pretend to judge, because I do not know enough about it, but which, at any rate, may at any time bring us into conflict with armies numbering millions, and our own forces would hardly be counted in such a war as they stand at present."

Lord Rosebery was Foreign Secretary of this country in 1886 and in 1892. He knew the traditions of the Foreign Office, and his experience of Cabinet affairs fitted him peculiarly as a critic of the Foreign Office policy which committed us to a Continental system. But he was not the only critic; there were many other fully qualified critics of foreign policy, who, in 1912, knew Britain had been enmeshed in the Continental system. And Sir Edward Grey was fully conscious of the opinion of his critics:

"I do know that a considerable amount of fault has been found with what some people think is and what they call my foreign policy, but which, of course, ought not to be called my foreign policy because it is quite impossible for any individual Foreign Minister to carry out a policy which is not also, in its main lines, the policy of the Cabinet of which he is a member."

That statement was true up to a point; but it was a little wide of strict accuracy in regard to the au-

thorization of the conversations between the British and French military and naval experts. The Cabinet as a whole was not told until long after the conversations were begun. Anyway, many people blamed the Foreign Secretary for the misunderstandings which existed between Germany and ourselves. So deep was the feeling of animosity that the two Governments in January consented to the visit of a British Minister to Berlin with the object of making a frank statement that would dispel the notion that Britain had sinister designs on Germany. In the debate on the address, Mr. Asquith said:

"Both Governments, the German Government and our own, have been and are animated by a sincere desire to bring about a better state of understanding. In the course of last month we had indications that the visit of a British Minister to Berlin would not be unwelcome, and might facilitate the attainment of our common object."

Later in his speech the Prime Minister gave an indication of the gravity of the situation which arose in the summer and autumn of 1911:

"We are told that there are masses of people in Germany who firmly believe that, at some time or times during the summer and autumn of last year we were meditating and even preparing an aggressive attack upon their country, and that the movements of our fleets were carefully calculated with that object in view. I am almost ashamed to have to contradict so wild and so extravagant a fiction. It is pure invention. There is, I need hardly assure the House, not a shadow of foundation for it, nor was there anything anywhere, or at any time, of an aggressive or provocative character in the movements of our ships. But the very fact that such rumours find credence, not, indeed, with the German Government, but in the minds of large

numbers of intelligent and fair-minded people in Germany. is, surely, in itself a significant and most regrettable symptom."

The Prime Minister might have added that it was also a regrettable symptom that large masses of intelligent people in our own country had very good reason for believing implicitly the same "extravagant fiction."

In the Reichstag, the day after the debate in the House of Commons, the German Chancellor, Herr von Bethmann Hollweg, gave his version of Lord Haldane's visit:

"When the English Minister of War, Lord Haldane, was here he talked over with us — without authorization to enter into binding agreements, but nevertheless at the instance of the British Cabinet — the points in which the interests of the two countries come into contact — (hear, hear, in all parts of the House) — with the object of establishing a basis for relations of greater confidence. (Hear, hear.) The exchange of views, which was heartily welcomed on our side, took place in numerous conversations of an exhaustive and frank description, and will be continued. (Cheers.) I do hope that the House will agree with me that I cannot at this stage of the matter speak about the details. ('Quite right!') But I do not wish to delay in communicating to the Reichstag the fact of the conversations and the nature of their aims. (General cheers.)"

The basis for relations of greater confidence was blown into the air three months after the visit to Berlin. "Strategy must respond to policy," said Lord Haldane, on March 21, "the policy of the Foreign Office." The navy estimates were introduced on March 18th, and they registered a superficial decrease of £307,100, but before the year was over

there was an increase of £2,498,624. The two-Power standard was abandoned, and a new policy directed straight against Germany adopted. In presenting the estimates to the House, Mr. Churchill said:

"I propose, with the permission of the House, to lay bare to them this afternoon with perfect openness the naval situation. It is necessary to do so mainly with reference to one Power. I regret that necessity, but nothing is to be gained by using indirect modes of expression. On the contrary, the Germans are a people of robust mind, whose strong and masculine sense and high courage do not recoil from and are not offended by plain and blunt statements of fact if expressed with courtesy and sincerity. Anyhow, I must discharge my duty to the House and the country. The time has come when both nations ought to understand, without ill-temper or disguise, what will be the conditions under which naval competition will be carried on during the next few years."

It was a bold policy initiated by the new First Lord; candour and openness would certainly be welcome features of the new administration. It was a good point gained to know it was henceforth unnecessary for us to consider France and Russia as a combination of naval force against us. There was one passage in the speech which was not quite as frank as it might have been:

"All slowing down by Germany will be accompanied naturally on our larger scale by us. I have to say 'within certain limits,' because, of course, both Great Britain and Germany have to consider, among other things, the building of other Powers, though the lead of both these countries is at present very considerable over any other Power besides each other."

If France and Russia, separately or combined, were no longer factors, which Britain had to consider in framing navy estimates, were they not formidable factors to Germany? Her policy was controlled by the actions of three Powers, one of which, Britain, aimed at an overwhelming superiority in itself against Germany. The figures for new construction of France and Russia in that year should have proved to Mr. Churchill the utter hopelessness of relying on such an argument. Germany had to reckon with the nations of the Franco-Russian Alliance, the Anglo-French Agreement, the Anglo-Russian Agreement, and the plans of General Staffs arising out of the conversations between the British and French military and naval experts; to say nothing of whatever other secret commitments there might be connected with the diplomacy of the Entente Powers. "Strategy must respond to policy, the policy of the Foreign Office!" What earthly chance was there for a holiday for a year? Mr. Churchill was undoubtedly sincere when he made the suggestion; but so long as France and Russia were the governing factors in German naval policy the thing was impossible. Though we gained a considerable amount of kudos for making the suggestion, time has shown how futile the notion was from the first.

The debate on the navy estimates of March, 1912, is worth reading again and again. Lord Charles Beresford made a frontal attack of great severity on the First Lord, and his speech was of great value for the manner in which he proved how much to blame we were in inspiring irritation and hatred in Germany by our bombast and our methods. He quoted many German papers to show how the speech

of the new First Lord, at Glasgow, earlier in the year, was received by the press of the Fatherland, and blamed the Admiralty for all the unrest in German naval spheres. Later in the debate Mr. Robert Harcourt referred to Bernhardi's book, *Germany and the Next War:*

"I have read in the last day or two a very interesting book, by a German General, General Bernhardi, and it bears out a good deal that the noble Lord said. It is not a piece of Jingo pamphleteering, but a serious military consideration of what the writer calls in his title *Germany and the Next War.* It is far more depressing than the worst Chauvinistic literature, because it gives a feeling of hopelessness in the unshakable conviction of a representative German that we are inspired by active and aggressive animosity against his country. I only take a sentence or two from that book. He says:

"'The Moroccan negotiations of the summer of 1911 gave an irrefutable demonstration of the unqualified hostility of England against us. It was clearly shown that England is determined to prevent by force every real extension of German power. One can scarcely doubt that England is thinking in dead earnest of attacking Germany in certain circumstances.'

"He speaks of the increase of the English fleet as a preparation for aggressive war, and he says:

"'It is impossible to regard the English preparations as merely measures of defence. The English Government know well that Germany cannot think on her side of attacking England, because such an attempt is in itself hopeless.'

"He points out that the Entente with France is really a warlike alliance against Germany, and, as to a land war, he points out that probably Germany will be supported by Austria, though nothing is said about Italy, but he specifically says that in a sea war it is practically certain that Ger-

many will stand absolutely alone, and he repeats again, writing, I presume, for the German public, that he regards an attack on England as absolutely hopeless. . . . What after all has been the result of all these firm resolves and panic programmes? Have we frightened Germany out of building? Have we even convinced her of our sincerity? We have only, apparently, unhappily produced the impression, false, as I earnestly believe, of bitter and unrelenting hostility. She is firmly convinced that we are forcing her deliberately into a position of isolation."

Not long after the holiday idea was started, Lord Haldane, who visited Berlin to allay the fears of the Germans as to our naval and military designs, broke out in a fresh place, and, in London, in June, he said:

"Keep up a fleet and secure command of the sea, and then their problem was a simple one. . . . At no distant time we ought to be the most powerful military and naval nation combined which the world had ever seen."

Was that one of the sentences used in the "exhaustive" conversations in Berlin at the beginning of the year, which gave so much satisfaction to the German Chancellor? Surely the rapid changes, the comings and goings of Ministers, the fine phrases, and polite interchanges, following on the heels of bitter recrimination, give some justification to those men who jeer at the whole business as a put-up job to keep the peoples of Europe and Britain in a state of economic slavery; a kind of twentieth century Monarchial League for the preservation of the thrones, royal and republican, of European states.

Then Lord Crewe followed Lord Haldane with a little flag waving, presumably to show Germany

how keen we were to rest for a year on our naval laurels, while Germany lost a year in competition with France and Russia. Our superiority, as Lord Crewe understood it, when he spoke in the House of Lords early in July, was of such a nature that the suggestion of a naval holiday must have struck Germany as a rather cruel joke. Lord Crewe said:

"So far as our existing position in any part of the world is concerned we are not afraid to declare that we consider the security of the country is achieved. . . . Taking March 31st, this year, we find that we have sixteen battleships and battle cruisers of the dreadnaught type as against fifteen possessed by all other Powers in European waters."

It was then a period of all-round congratulation that the scare, "without the slightest foundation in fact," of 1909, had been the means of placing the British navy in a position to tackle the Triple Alliance and a few smaller states thrown in. Ministers, however, did not stop to consider what the other side of the account was: the effect on Germany. They did not see the items the other page would bear within three years. Visualization is not a Ministerial gift. The prophecy of Bernhardi was not a subject for Cabinet discussion, and the repeated warnings of the British pacifists were contemptuously flung aside by the "apostles of peace" as mere drivel of drooling millennialists.

The naval position in the Mediterranean was the subject of a debate in the Lords later in July. Lord Haldane admitted the country was face to face with one of the most trying naval situations that had existed for a very long time:

"The Government have made up their minds that the

position of this country depends on sea power. We have told the only Power which is our rival — we have told them in the most friendly fashion — that that is our view, and whatever efforts may be put forth, they must reckon on our making efforts still greater than any they make."

The German-speaking amateur diplomatist, as he was referred to by the Opposition leader, gave a comic touch to a friendly bit of advice. Still, it is hard to believe such a statement could be made by Lord Haldane only six months after his visit to Berlin. Anyway, it was a sad commentary on the suggestion for a naval holiday.

At this time there is perhaps no sadder reflection one can indulge in than the position of the masses in Europe from 1912 to the middle of July, 1914. In Britain at any rate the millions of workers went about their business utterly oblivious of the Continental danger. Those who addressed large audiences frequently can testify there was no notion of war in the minds of the people. Safe in the idea that a great navy was our supreme insurance against strife, they laughed at the prognostications of the orators of the Lord Roberts school. Ireland was the topic one party dealt with, almost to the exclusion of all others. Sir Edward Carson bemoaned the fact that all his labours could not rouse the British electorate out of their profound apathy and unwillingness to regard that question from his point of view. They knew nothing of the imminence of battle. No Minister warned them; labour leaders were as ignorant as themselves of our jeopardy in being entangled in the Continental system. The wealth-producers of these islands, somehow, in a strange subconscious way, relied on a Liberal Gov-

ernment keeping them out of the toils of rotten diplomacy and the schemes of militarists. Their faith, their patience, their credulousness, are qualities that make one sad to think on now that their homes are making vast sacrifices of bread-winners, and, later on, the weak ones left behind will have to bear the greater part of the cost. There were warnings, but as they came not from members of the Government little heed was paid to them. In the House of Commons, on the Defence Vote, in Committee of Supply, Mr. Bonar Law said:

"My instinct tells me that there is no danger; but my reason, such as it is, is in conflict with instinct. But when I use my judgment as best I can in considering what the facts of the position are, I say deliberately that in my judgment Lord Roberts did not exaggerate when he said the other day that this country had never been in a position of greater peril."

What did Lord Roberts know? Was his alarm occasioned because we were, as Lord Rosebery said, for good or for evil, now embraced in the midst of the Continental system? Did Lord Roberts knew that an outbreak of hostilities on the Continent, no matter how slight the cause, might at any time drag us into a great European struggle? What peril were we in? And why were we in peril? Was all Lord Roberts' activity, in urging the Government to adopt drastic military changes, for the purpose of raising an army large enough to meet all requirements of our commitments? Did Lord Roberts know that we were committed to the obligations of war, and that we were bound to assist France, if she were attacked by a third Power? The secrets

of foreign policy, no matter how well they are kept from the rank and file of the House and the general public, are often enough the common property of a certain class whose connections are always in touch with the departments and the great armament firms. It is "not in the interest of the public" to answer questions in the House, when a member asks for information from Ministers which has been the gossip of clubs and dinner tables. This Government has treated the private members of the House, as to foreign policy and naval affairs, as if they were Sunday-school scholars not of an age to read Deuteronomy. Why, even the girls at Queen's College had the benefit of the militant and brilliant Cramb!

In July, 1912, just two years before the first despatch from Germany in the White Paper, Mr. Churchill made a statement on the Supplementary Naval Estimates, on our position in the North Sea and in the Mediterranean. In this amazing addition to the estimates introduced in the year of the Berlin visit, and the year of the suggested holiday, we find the First Lord striking out in another direction, not because the new German Navy Law, be it observed, increased in new construction of capital ships, but because of the increase of striking force of ships of all classes available at all seasons of the year. Here it should be pointed out that there had been no increase at all in the money spent by Germany on new construction: in 1911 she spent £11,710,859, in 1912, £11,491,187, in 1913, £11,010,883, and in 1914, £10,316,264. A steady reduction in the figures for new construction. But suppose all the arguments laid down by the First Lord were accepted; was it fair, in making a statement of the

position in the North Sea and in the Mediterranean, to lead the country to believe that Germany alone was the factor which affected our policy? The Cabinet must have known in July that the plans of the British and French General Staffs were complete, and that we should have to defend the northern and western coasts of France while her fleet was concentrated in the Mediterranean. Did Germany know that much? What are military and naval attachés for if they fail to learn facts of that nature? Anyway, in times of peace it is no difficult business for one navy to know pretty accurately the general disposition of another, particularly when that other navy happens to be its chief rival.

A thousand rushing currents were carrying us on in the autumn of 1912 to the European whirlpool. Lord Roberts and Lord Curzon, in October, spoke, at Manchester, on Compulsory Military Service. The feeling abroad had been intensely aggravated by the trend of events in Britain, but the speech of Lord Roberts did even more to create deep bitterness than the policy of our Admiralty. He said:

"Now at the present day, in the year 1912, just as in 1866 and just as in 1870, war will take place the instant the German forces by land and sea are, by their superiority at every point, as certain of victory as anything in human calculation can be made certain. 'Germany strikes when Germany's hour has struck.' That is the time-honoured policy of her Foreign Office. That was the policy relentlessly pursued by Bismarck and Moltke in 1866 and in 1870; it has been her policy decade by decade since that date; it is her policy at the present hour. And, gentlemen, it is an excellent policy. It is, or should be, the policy of every nation prepared to play a great part in history."

This speech was not only deeply resented in Britain; it caused in Germany an acrimonious flood of comment to be poured out in her press. Our own *Evening Standard* said such language would be "scarcely justifiable if it (Germany) were at open war with us." In the House several members raised at question time the wisdom of a Field Marshal of the British army making such speeches, but they got little encouragement from the Foreign Secretary and the Minister for War. The Foreign Secretary icily declined to do anything. Lord Roberts was free to go up and down the country breathing out threatenings and slaughter against Germany, but Tom Mann had to cool his heels in a cell for giving soldiers the advice of Tolstoy! The bitter agitation of the conscriptionists continued all through the autumn, and Germany was the one country referred to in their bellicose speeches. The men who fomented war were "apostles of peace" and true Englishmen, the men who worked for peace were traitors and cowards. It was an edifying spectacle; one to make a cage full of monkeys silent with envy. And the public thought little about it. Well might Chamfort cry, "The public! — how many fools does it take to make a public?" The position at the end of 1912, and some events that followed hard upon that year, remind one of the agitation of the Corinthians in the first book of Thucydides' *Peloponnesian War.*

"It becomes you rather, on many accounts, with manly confidence to declare for war. The oracle of a god prescribes it; that god himself has promised his assistance; and the rest of Greece is ready to join you in the contest, some from a principle of fear, and some from a principle of interest. Neither on you will the first breach of the peace

be charged. The god who advises war plainly judges that to be already broken: you will only act to redress its violation: for the breach is not to be charged on those who armed to revenge it; but on those who were the first aggressors. Since then war, considered in every light, appears honourable in regard to you, ye Lacedæmonians: since we with united voices, encourage you to it, as most strongly requisite for our general and separate interests, defer no longer to succour the Potidæans, Dorians by descent, and besieged by Ionians (the reverse was formerly the case), and to recover again the liberty of others. The business will admit of no longer delay, when some already feel the blow; and others, if it once be known that we met here together, and durst not undertake our own defence, will in a very little time be sensible of the same. Reflect within yourselves, confederates, that affairs are come to extremities: that we have suggested the most advisable measures; and give your ballot for war. Be not terrified at its immediate dangers; but animate yourselves with the hope of a long-lasting peace to be procured by it; for a peace produced by war is ever the most firm; but from tranquillity and ease to be averse to war, can by no means abate or dissipate our danger. With this certain conclusion, that a state in Greece is started up into a tyrant, and aims indifferently at the liberty of us all, her arbitrary plan being partly executed, and partly in agitation — let us rush against, and at once pull her down."

We know well what happened to the Lacedæmonians.

Nineteen hundred and twelve was undoubtedly a fateful year for Great Britain, and November in that year was a fateful month. Wild speeches were delivered up and down the country on the navy and the territorial forces. On November 14th, London was struck by a Tory orgy. There was a meeting at the Albert Hall for the leaders of the Opposition; at

the Queen's Hall one for the back-benchers; and at the Hippodrome another for Mr. R. G. Knowles the comedian, and the Ulster party. It was a great night in the history of empire. At the Queen's Hall Lord Percy gave his audience a shock:

"It would require courage to tell the country the truth that they are living in a 'fool's paradise,' and that it was not merely our army but the army of France which was our present defence against German invasion. And it was a base betrayal of our obligations not to be able to support France with an adequate military force of our own."

That was a pretty strong statement to make by one who was not remotely connected with the Foreign Office when the Anglo-French Agreement was drawn up. Precisely what effect that statement had upon the Government is hard to tell, but it is nevertheless true that eight days after it was made Sir Edward Grey wrote to the French ambassador, M. Cambon, reminding him of the understanding of January, 1906, authorizing conversations to take place between French and British military and naval experts. The letter stated that the experts had consulted together from time to time, and though nothing of a binding nature limited the actions of either Government, in the event of one of the countries being attacked by a third Power they would immediately discuss whether both Governments should act together; further, if the measures involved action, the Governments would at once take into consideration the plans of the General Staffs. M. Cambon replied confirming the terms of the agreement. Why Sir Edward Grey should exchange letters with the French ambassador at that

time on this grave matter, is hard to tell, unless the speech of Lord Percy had embarrassed the Foreign Office; but there seems to have been no other reason. There was a rumour in London before the 19th, to the effect that German reservists in the United Kingdom had received notice that they might be required to return to Germany within twenty-four hours. Questions were asked in the House of Commons as to the disposition of the fleet in the Mediterranean and the number of ships there to guard British interests. Mr. Churchill said there were only three armoured cruisers there, if account was not taken of those refitting at Gibraltar, between October 17th and November 3rd. Mr. Yerburgh asked whether it was the policy of the Government at the beginning of the year, and before the introduction of the naval estimates, practically to withdraw our battleships from the Mediterranean; but the First Lord declined to deal with the question. Sir Edward Grey in his letter to the French ambassador pointed out that the disposition of the French and British fleets respectively at that moment was not based upon an engagement to co-operate in war. That was surely a most extraordinary statement for the Foreign Secretary to make. Was it true? Lord Haldane dubbed the Foreign Secretary, "Commander of the Forces," and he also told us that "strategy depends on policy, the policy of the Foreign Office." Yet our command of the Mediterranean, three weeks before he wrote to M. Cambon, amounted to an effective force of only three armoured cruisers, which the First Lord considered an ample fleet. Evidently the plans of General Staffs were well in hand at that time, and it was left to

France to look after the Mediterranean while we devoted our naval attention to the northern coasts of France and the North Sea. How far the plans of General Staffs operated we may never know, but it is a significant fact that an event of an extraordinary nature happened in Belgium just about the time the Foreign Secretary exchanged letters with M. Cambon.

In November, 1912, the Belgian House of Parliament held a secret sitting at the instance of the Belgian King in order to consider urgent precautionary measures. King Albert had become possessed of facts of a threatening nature. These he disclosed to the Parliament, which listened attentively to his warnings, and immediately adopted a drastic military programme which had been delayed for thirty years, and which King Leopold II had advocated in vain. The drastic programme raised the war strength of the Belgian army to 150,000 for the field army, 60,000 for auxiliary services, and 130,000 for garrisons; 340,000 men in all. A gigantic force for a country of seven and a half millions; and when it is understood that Belgium was believed to be protected by five great Powers from aggression, such a military force needs a deal of explanation.

Now what had Belgium to fear in 1912? She knew that three of the signatories of the Treaty of 1839 were allied, and that Germany was not working amicably with the Entente Powers. It is scarcely believable that her Foreign Office did not know that the French and British military and naval experts were formulating plans for the General Staffs. But did Belgium know that these plans included the pos-

sibility of her territory being used as the battlefield of a war with Germany against the Entente Powers? Was it not common talk in military circles that in the event of a war between Germany and France that Germany would be forced to invade Belgium? Could the plans of General Staffs, in the circumstances, leave Belgium out of consideration? Assuredly not. The notion is too utterly preposterous to waste arguments upon for a moment. There was only one route for rapid advance Germany could take and that was through Belgium.

The information the King of the Belgians had to impart to his Parliament was closely connected with the subject of the letters exchanged by Sir Edward Grey and M. Cambon. From the facts it is plain that neither France nor Great Britain was in a position to protect her neutrality and independence. And to compare what was done by Lord Granville in 1870 with the present crisis, is to ignore the fact that Great Britain in 1870 had no agreement with either France or Germany. She was then in a position to insist on the signatories of the Treaty of 1839 observing the neutrality of Belgium. All the talk of Ministers on this point, since the end of July, 1914, has not been worth the ink to print it.

It was laid down in 1908 by the Foreign Secretary that:

"We cannot recognize the right of any Power or State to alter an international treaty without the consent of the other parties to it. We cannot ourselves recognize the result of any such action till the other Powers have been consulted, including especially in this case Turkey, who is one of the other Powers most closely concerned. Because, if it is to become the practice in foreign politics that any single Power

or State can at will make abrupt violations of international treaties, you will undermine public confidence. . . . You cannot expect to see expenditure on armaments diminished if people live under the apprehension that treaties can be suddenly altered without the consent of all the Powers who are parties to them."

It is to be regretted that the spirit as well as the letter of an essential principle of the law of nations, subscribed to by the Powers in London in 1871 (which is the law upon which the Foreign Secretary based his statement) was not followed by Britain in every diplomatic affair since 1904.

CHAPTER IX

"NOT IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST"

"SOMEWHERE there are still people and herds, but not with us, my brethren: with us there are states.

The state? What is that? Well! now open your ears, for now I deliver my sentence on the death of peoples.

The state is called the coldest of all cold monsters. And coldly it lieth; and this lie creepeth out of its mouth: 'I, the state, am the people.'

It is a lie! Creators they were who created the peoples and hung one belief and one love over them; thus they served life.

Destroyers they are who lay traps for many, calling them the state: they hung a sword and a hundred desires over them.

Whatever a people is left, it understandeth not the state but hateth it as the evil eye and a sin against customs and rights.

This sign I show unto you: every people speaketh its own tongue of good and evil — not understood by its neighbour. Every people hath found out for itself its own language in customs and rights.

But the state is a liar in all tongues of good or evil: whatever it saith, it lieth; whatever it hath, it hath stolen.

False is everything in it; with stolen teeth it biteth, the biting one. False are even its intestines.

Confusion of languages of good and evil. This sign I show unto you as the sign of the state. Verily, this sign pointeth to the will unto death! Verily, it waveth hands unto the preachers of death!

Far too many are born: for the superfluous the state was invented.

Behold, behold, how it allureth them, the much-too-many! How it devoureth, cheweth, and masticateth them!"

— Nietzsche.

It is not necessary to go further back than 1911, the first year of this Parliament, for evidence of the Foreign Office and the Admiralty's method of hoodwinking members and shielding their own systems of evasion, hyperbole, and secrecy. This Government is not the first to set up absolutist systems in the departments, but from Liberal statesmen the mass of people expect democratic treatment. When Toryism finished its mad career in 1905, the vast majority of the electorate imagined Tory methods would be interred with the party. "Not in the public interest," was the phrase it was thought might satisfy over-curious Conservatives, but Radicals were not to be put off with cryptadia. However galling it may be to make such an admission in these "democratic" days, it must be confessed that the House of Lords is not the only place that thrives upon an hereditary system. All departments more or less live and move and have their being just as prolific noble houses do; with this difference, of course, that permanent officials are not so easily shifted. Heredity is the evil influence which has destroyed Democracy; and now, like Oswald Alving, it is struck down just as it was about to ask for the sun. Yes, continuity of the diplomatic errors of our predecessors is the reason for our deplorable position in Europe.

In the early days of the first session of this Parliament the Government hung up the stereotyped text,

"Not in the public interest," to scare off the inquisitive. A private member asked the Secretary for Foreign Affairs whether he had responded to the speech of the German Chancellor (in which was expressed the opinion that an open and confident exchange of views would do much to remove suspicion arising from naval and military expenditure) and whether he could lay upon the table of the House any papers relating thereto? The Under-Secretary replied that the informal discussions were continuing, and the Government hoped that they would "help to promote the maintenance and growth of the existing friendly relations between the two countries"; but, "it would not be in the public interest to lay papers."

To understand thoroughly how thick a barrier members had to pierce to get at the source of information which determined the action of the Admiralty in 1909 (to build the four extra ships) one has only to look through the long series of questions put to Mr. McKenna, and the evasive replies given by him during the first weeks of the session. Behind the sign, "Not in the public interest," the Government hid their errors of judgment and all the criminal machinations of the scaremongers outside the House. Publicity is considered to be one of the blessings of our Parliamentary procedure; but there are affairs of vital interest to the public that private members cannot get at: and, on the other hand, probably because of the congestion of business, floods of oratory unstemmed for at least eight hours a day for four days each week, and much is overlooked by the press that should for mere party reasons be given to the public. Sometimes a question

is put which contains matter of deep importance to the people, but a non-committal reply, or an evasive answer, checks the interest it would have if revelation and not secrecy were the chief aim and desire of Ministers. Take the following question and reply which passed almost without comment in the House and the press. The date was March 8th, 1911:

"Mr. Jowett asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if, during his term of office, any undertaking, promise, or understanding had been given to France that, in certain eventualities, British troops would be sent to assist the operations of the French army?

"Mr. McKinnon Wood (Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs): 'The answer is in the negative.'"

Numbers of members knew the answer was untrue, but not even a single supplementary question was put. The sacred veil over foreign affairs must not be torn aside. It is, however, more than probable the Under-Secretary believed the answer he gave was quite true. We know now the answer should have been, "Yes!" But if that answer had been given there would have been great diplomatic trouble in the chancelleries of Europe; and, which is of deeper concern, the Government would have suffered an immediate storm of protest from the vertebrata of the Liberal party in the country. Many members were loath to press the question because they had nothing but rumour to go on; and there was, besides, this to be considered, namely: the pledges given to the constituencies to support the Government in bringing certain first-class measures of reform to the Statute Book. This was indeed the

ever-restraining reason why so many Radicals did not vote against the Government on naval expenditure. So the complexities and the multiplicities of our Parliamentary system make it an almost impossible feat for a member at all times to vote according to his conscience. The legislator after all is the real Jesuit.

Foreign Affairs got precious little discussion in the House in 1911. In 1910 there was less; no Foreign Office vote was put down that year. Many complaints on all sides of the House were heard, that so little opportunity should be given to members to worm a statement of policy out of the Foreign Secretary. The Anglo-Russian Agreement was made the subject of severe criticism on a day when the debate on Foreign Affairs was interrupted at a quarter past eight by a long discussion on a railway bill! But, if foreign affairs got little attention, the army certainly came in for particular notice; and Mr. Haldane's reorganization of the Expeditionary Force was subjected to criticism from the militarists. It was awkward for the Minister for War to deal effectively with the censure poured upon him, for the debate was more in the nature of a sham fight than a real battle. One felt that Mr. Haldane was doing the best he could to meet the demands of General Staffs; but that it would never do to carry out all the suggestions of the military experts for fear of alarming his own party, who knew nothing about the secret understanding the Foreign Secretary had made with the French Government. Several Opposition members found it very difficult to make headway against the secret; and in their speeches only slight references were made to the Expedition-

ary Force having to meet Continental armies. Some members frankly said its numbers were insufficient; Sir Reginald Pole-Carew said, "it would be murder to send them."

The navy estimates brought about one of the most instructive debates of the session. Private members on the Liberal side completely riddled the forecasts of Ministers made in 1909 and 1910, as to the naval position of Germany, though they were unable to check the headlong rush of our armaments. That debate was particularly interesting; for in it Mr. Dillon, in referring to France, proved himself a far bolder man than all the Opposition soldiers were in the debate on the army. Mr. Dillon said:

"'I interjected an observation on Monday in the speech of one of the speakers who was talking about this question of building against the Triple Alliance, and who insisted for the safety of this Empire on building against the Triple Alliance. I said, What about France? I thought that one of the glories of the British Government had been that it had formed an Entente with France.'

"Mr. Lee: 'It is not the same thing as an alliance.'

"Mr. Dillon: 'I should like to know what it is. Some of us have had very uneasy feelings since the other day we read that M. Pichon, the Foreign Minister for France, spoke of constant military conversations going on with England. I say that there is a very uncomfortable feeling among many honourable members that there is a secret alliance with France, or some understanding which is not known to the members of this House, and if we are to be told that that is the result of all these alliances and understandings, this country must be prepared to build not according to the two Power standard, but up to the three Power standard which was put forward here to-night.'"

Why Mr. Dillon should be alarmed at a state-

ment made by the French Foreign Secretary (when in answer to a question put by Mr. Jowett only eight weeks earlier our own Foreign Secretary said that no undertaking, promise, or understanding, had been given to France) was very strange. Perhaps Mr. Dillon did not believe our Foreign Secretary. Anyway, he showed a superb disregard for the courtesies which should acknowledge the privilege of all public departments to keep their secrets from private members.

A fortnight after Mr. Dillon's reference to the statements made by M. Pichon, the French Foreign Minister, Mr. Jowett put another question to the Foreign Secretary:

"Mr. Jowett asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, if, when he came into office, there was in existence any understanding or undertaking, expressed or implied, in virtue of which Great Britain would be under obligations to France to send troops, in certain eventualities, to assist the operations of the French army?

"Sir Edward Grey: 'The extent of the obligations to which Great Britain was committed was that expressed or implied in the Anglo-French Convention laid before Parliament. There was no other engagement bearing on the subject.'"

The Cabinet perhaps acted on the method of Solon who in his original constitution denied the people initiative, and allowed them only to propose what had first been thoroughly considered and approved by the senate. Let us say then that in March, 1911, the Cabinet were not agreed on the matter referred to in Mr. Jowett's question, and the time had not arrived for letting the House into the confidence of the Foreign Secretary. But then there

is this to be remembered: Did all the Cabinet in March, 1911, know any more than Mr. Jowett?

For an example of the Government's method of hanging out the sign, "Not in the public interest," the following is hard to beat:

"Mr. Yerburgh asked the Prime Minister whether, in stating in his speech on our standard of naval strength on 26th May, 1909, that the end was to ensure for this country in any conceivable condition, and against all possible hazards, unassailable naval superiority which would give us complete command of the sea, and make any attempt to interfere with any part of the Empire or sea-borne commerce an impossibility, he is to be understood as ruling out of calculation, in computing our requisite naval strength, the fleets of any other Power with whom we may, at the time, be on terms of intimate friendship?

"The Prime Minister: 'I do not think that matters of this kind can be conveniently or adequately dealt with by question and answer. I can only refer the hon. member to the speech which he quotes and to the speech made on the same occasion by the First Lord of the Admiralty.'

"Mr. Arthur Lee: 'Is the right hon. gentleman aware that in his absence an entirely new definition of the two-Power standard was laid down by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs?'

"The Prime Minister: 'I am not aware of that.'

"Mr. Yerburgh: 'May I ask whether or not we are to understand that the Government arrived at no decision upon this particular question? Is the right hon. gentleman not aware that this is a question of supreme importance, and that in arriving at our standard of naval strength previous governments had regard to the power of the fleets of other countries?'

"The Prime Minister: 'I think this question shows the inconvenience of dealing with these matters by way of question and answer.'

"Mr. James Hope: 'May I ask whether it takes a longer time to make a battleship or an enemy?'"

Most pertinent this last question, and not easily answered; one indeed requiring notice.

On the motion for adjournment for the Easter recess, Mr. Swift MacNeill raised the subject of secrecy in foreign affairs. He said:

"From generation to generation, you have allowed treaties involving the highest international obligations — involving questions of peace and war — to be taken absolutely out of the hands of the House. It is no exaggeration to say, so far as international policy is concerned, you have rendered the House as little effectively powerful as any man walking over Westminster Bridge. Over and over again treaties involving matters of life and death, involving questions of first-class importance, have been ratified behind the back of Parliament. . . . The people themselves must be allowed to know all about this diplomacy and what it is. And there should be no secrecy in regard to high diplomatic statecraft about it. The House of Commons is ample judge of what is discreet and what is indiscreet, and it is a complete absurdity for others to treat us as children or for us to allow ourselves to be so treated in matters of such high international importance as those involving questions of peace and war."

The Foreign Secretary replied that there must be secrecy up to a certain point, and that the ratification of treaties was one of far too great importance to be discussed on an occasion of that kind; and he asked the House to bear in mind that not until the House of Commons was really free to devote itself to the discussions of Imperial affairs would it get control.

The House had not long to wait for an illustration of the gravity of the charge directed by Mr.

Swift MacNeill against the Foreign Office. On May 2nd, 1911, a question was put down concerning the French expedition to Fez:

"Mr. Dillon asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the British Government had been consulted by the French Government in reference to the proposed military operations against Fez; and whether the British Government had in any way approved or made itself responsible for this attack on the independence of the Empire of Morocco?

"The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir Edward Grey): 'His Majesty's Government have been informed by the French Government of the measures which are being adopted for the succour of Europeans in Fez, and they understand that information has also been given to other Governments. The action taken by France is not intended to alter the political status of Morocco, and His Majesty's Government cannot see why any objection should be taken to it.'"

Now who were the Europeans to be succoured? Well, in the first place they were not in Fez. In the second place they were all powerful enough to dispense with the services of the British Government. Many of the people asking succour were great bankers, armament makers, British newspaper correspondents, philanthropic millionaires intimately connected with royalties, and sundry "representatives" of the people. Succour! these were the gangs that bled Morocco to death. Anyway, the military operations of the French against Fez were merely steps taken to destroy that "scrap of paper," the Algeciras Act. The secret articles of 1904 were not then made public. So when His Majesty's Government could not see why any objection should be taken to the military operations against Fez, the British

Government were really fulfilling all the obligations of its secret diplomacy, knowing the public of Britain would acquiesce because it would be misinformed by the Jingo press in league with the advertising department of the Foreign Office.

What really went on in and about Fez has been fully described by M. Francis de Pressensé:

"At this point the *Comitê du Maroc* and its organs surpassed themselves. They organized a campaign of systematic untruth. Masters of almost the entire press, they swamped the public with false news. Fez was presented as threatened by siege or sack. A whole European French Colony was suddenly discovered there, living in anguish. The ultimate fate of the women and children was described in the most moving terms. . . . At all costs the Europeans, the Sultan, Fez itself must be saved. . . . As ever from the beginning of this enterprise, the Government knew nothing, willed nothing of itself. With a salutary dread of complications it would have preferred not to move, perhaps, even, had it dared, to withdraw from the hornet's nest. But the greater fears it experienced from another quarter prevailed; those inculcated by the so-called patriotic shoutings, the concerted clamours of the orchestra of which the *Comitê du Maroc* holds the baton, and whose chief performers are to be found in *Le Temps* and *Le Matin*. The order to advance was given. . . . Already while the expedition was on its way, light began to pierce. Those redoubtable rebels who were threatening Fez had disappeared like the dew in the morning. Barely did a few ragged horsemen fire off a shot or two before turning around and riding away at a furious gallop. A too disingenuous, or too truthful, correspondent gave the show away. The expeditionary force complains, he gravely records, of the absence of the enemy; the approaching harvest season is keeping all the healthy males in the fields! Thus did the phantom so dexterously conjured by the *Comitê du Maroc* for the benefit of its aims disappear in a night. . . .

Avowals and disclosures then began in right earnest. One of the correspondents who had contributed his share to the concert of lying news, wrote with an admirable *sang-froid* that, in truth, there had been some exaggeration, that, in point of fact, at no moment had the safety of Fez and its inhabitants been seriously menaced; that the idea of a regular siege and of a sudden capture had been alike chimerical and that, moreover, so far as the provisioning of the place was concerned, he could reassure the most timorous that there was sufficient corn in the city to feed the whole population, plus the expeditionary column, for more than a year! The farce was played. After Casablanca, Fez! France without realizing it, without wishing it, almost without knowing it, had taken a decisive step. An indefinite occupation of the capital was the natural prelude to a Protectorate. For the clever men who had invented and executed the scenario there only now remained the task of reaping the fruit of their efforts. The era of concessions, profits, dividends, was about to open. Premature joyfulness! It was the era of difficulties which was at hand."

His Majesty's Government could not see why any objection should be taken to it! The Foreign Office could not see that it marked the beginning of the end of European peace!

But the people are helpless. They are being ground to powder every day by the diplomatic machine which never in the history of European affairs consummated a single treaty that worked for the real benefit of the people. Juggernaut! Look where the car has passed across the fair plain of western Europe. Who can describe the woe this Kumbhakarna has wrought! Not until "a crescent-headed arrow from Rama's bow" strikes down the foul idol, which Bright fifty years ago thought overthrown, will the people know any rest from war.

As an example of how quickly news travels across the desert to the House of Commons when British "interests" are in "danger," and how easy it is for "British subjects" who are not in danger to find British legislators eager to force the Government to move something of an extensive military character to protect them, the following taken from *Hansard,* April 25th, 1911, is a gem:

"Major Archer-Shee: 'I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he can inform the House as to the number of British subjects residing in Fez at the present time, and what steps the Government propose taking to safeguard British interests in that part of Morocco?'

"Mr. McKinnon Wood (Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs): 'The number of British subjects residing at Fez on March 27th, 1911, apart from persons of Moorish parentage, was ten. Of these, six were women and two were children. His Majesty's Government do not contemplate any active measures. They consider that the arrangements being made under French supervision will afford the necessary protection to British subjects at Fez. No special measures appear to be called for to safeguard British interests in that part of Morocco.'

"Mr. Dillon: 'Has the Government any information which would give them cause for believing that there is any danger to Europeans?'

"Mr. McKinnon Wood: 'No, we have no such information.'

"Mr. Remnant: 'May I ask whether any representations have been made to the French Government to carry out the suggestions?'

"Mr. McKinnon Wood: 'No representations have been made to the French Government.'

"Major Archer-Shee: 'May I ask whether it is intended to co-operate with other Governments should it become necessary to send a large force to pacify Morocco?'

"Mr. McKinnon Wood: 'No occasion has arisen to make us contemplate any such action.'

"Mr. Remnant: 'May I ask the hon. gentleman whether he will ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether it is his intention to make representations, and, if so, whether he will do so at once?'

"Mr. McKinnon Wood: 'There is no necessity to make representations.'

"Major Archer-Shee: 'In view of the unsatisfactory nature of the reply, I beg leave to move the adjournment of the House to call attention to a definite matter of urgent public importance, namely, the attitude to be adopted by this country in the event of extensive military operations being required for the pacification of Morocco.'

"Mr. Dillon: 'This is for the purpose of creating a scare.'"

Major Archer-Shee did not get the adjournment of the House. But the ten British subjects in Fez must have been deeply grateful to the British legislators who were so anxious to protect them when they were in no danger. And no doubt British "interests" felt under a debt which we hope was paid according to service rendered. What is the good of having a Foreign Office if it cannot be urged by members of the House of Commons to do something for British "interests"?

On May 23rd, the Foreign Secretary said the French Government had no choice but to relieve Fez with the least possible delay. When Mr. Dillon asked whether the House was not entitled to know to what extent this country was committed to "this ill-omened and cruel expedition," the Foreign Secretary replied, "We are not committed at all." The secret articles and letters connected with the Anglo-French Agreement were not yet made public.

But Article VIII of the Agreement of 1904, stated, "The Agreement which may be come to on the subject between France and Spain shall be communicated to His Britannic Majesty's Government." A convention was drawn up between France and Spain on October 3rd, 1904, for the partition of Morocco. A copy of this secret treaty was sent by the French ambassador to Lord Lansdowne, who in acknowledging it said, "I need not say that the confidential character of the Convention entered into by the President of the French Republic and the King of Spain in regard to French and Spanish interests in Morocco is fully recognized by us, and will be duly respected." No, we were not committed,— not publicly. Well might Mr. Swift MacNeill say, "It is a complete absurdity for others to treat us as children, or for us to allow ourselves to be so treated in matters of such high international importance as those involving questions of peace and war."

After Casablanca, Fez; and after Fez, Agadir. Early in July, Germany set about taking a hand in the Moroccan business. Publicly, she was as much concerned in the economic arrangements of the Powers in Morocco as France or Britain. In February, 1909, she had signed a declaration with France maintaining the integrity and independence of Morocco. The *Panther* at Agadir was an indication of what the German Government thought of the French expedition to Fez. Questions were asked in the House of Commons, but the Government immediately put out the sign, "Not in the public interest"; and leaders of the Opposition, following the tradition of continuity, respected the feelings of the Foreign Office. The first question was asked on July

3rd, and although Captain Faber asked "if it were not safe for British men-o'-war to go" to Agadir, the Government made no statement until the 27th, July, and then the Prime Minister choked discussion. He said:

"Too close an analysis at the present moment of causes and antecedents might provoke in more than one quarter recrimination and retorts, which it is on every ground desirable to avoid . . . and I would venture, in the general interest, to make a strong appeal to the House, not on the present occasion to enter into further details or open up controversial ground."

After a protest from Mr. Ramsey Macdonald against the flamboyant speech delivered in the city by Mr. Lloyd George, the House settled down to talk about any other foreign affairs but Morocco and the *Panther*. The next time the question was raised was in November. After the publication of the secret articles in the Paris papers, *Le Temps* and *Le Matin,* the British Government decided to let the House of Commons see them. Late in November Sir Edward Grey made his statement on the Moroccan affairs, and the House had an opportunity of speaking its mind on secret diplomacy, without really appreciating the real gravity of the business. The Prime Minister, relieved no doubt that the Government escaped so lightly, said:

"The House has heard from my right honourable friend the Foreign Secretary, and I believe has heard with universal satisfaction, that the world is now in possession of the whole of our treaty obligations on this subject. There is no secret arrangement of any sort or kind which has not been disclosed, and fully disclosed, to the public, and we

ask, from that point of view, that our conduct should be judged by the measure of our treaty obligations which members of the House are able to ascertain precisely for themselves."

That was good news. And when the Prime Minister emphasized the fact on December 6th, 1911, in reply to a question put by Mr. Gordon Harvey, numbers of members thought the ugly rumour of our being under war-obligations to France would be utterly dispelled. The Prime Minister said:

"As has been stated, there were no secret engagements with France other than those that have now been published, and there are no secret engagements with any foreign Government that entail upon us any obligation to render military or naval assistance to any other Power." [1]

Later in that month we learned that all treaties had not been made public:

"Mr. Swift MacNeill: 'Do I understand the right

[1] In the December, 1911, issue of the *Review of Reviews* Mr. W. T. Stead had something to say on the Moroccan Crisis:

"We were nearly involved in the stupendous catastrophe of a gigantic war with the greatest of all the World-Powers in order to enable France to tear up the Treaty of Algeciras by taking possession of the Empire of Morocco whose independence and integrity we were pledged to defend. It is not to our interest to make over to France a vast domain in Northern Africa. . . . The fact remains that in order to put France in possession of Morocco we all but went to war with Germany. We have escaped war, but we have not escaped the natural and abiding enmity of the German people. Is it possible to frame a heavier indictment of the foreign policy of any British Ministry? The secret, the open secret of this almost incredible crime against treaty faith, British interests, and the peace of the world, is the unfortunate fact that Sir Edward Grey has been dominated by men at the Foreign Office who believe all considerations must be subordinated to the one supreme duty of thwarting Germany at every turn, even if in so doing British interests, treaty faith and the peace of the world are trampled underfoot. I speak that of which I know."

honourable gentleman to say that there are other secret treaties besides the secret treaty recently disclosed between this country and France?'

"Sir Edward Grey: 'Does the hon. gentleman mean between this country and France?'

"Mr. MacNeill: 'Between this country and any other country. We know about France.'

"Sir Edward Grey: 'Yes, sir; there are other engagements that have not been published.'"

We have recently been throwing a deal of contempt on the doctrine that Might is Right, but wherein does the Kaiser's Government differ from ours in foreign policy? Are ethics any nearer politics in any modern European state than they were in Machiavelli's time? For those who hold the notion that a Government stands in the ethical position of an individual and in its operations it should always be actuated by the ethics which should govern the actions of an individual, let it be observed that responsibility cannot be fixed on a Government as it can be fixed on the individual; and ethics and responsibility cannot be divorced. Is it possible to fix responsibility on this Government? Some one says it is responsible to the people. What, in the sense that an individual is responsible for his actions? No, indeed. In the case of the individual when he lies, or steals, or murders, there is no shifting responsibility; but in the case of a Government where is personal responsibility to be fixed?

Is it any wonder that the world of thought is shaken every now and then by a Stirner, or a Bakunin, or a Nietzsche? Statesmen must not always scoff at the notion that "for the superfluous the state was invented." Injustice and poverty, hatred and

war, will continue so long as men can shift responsibility.

"The ultimate purpose of the State is not to rule men, to keep them in fear, to subject them to the will of others, but, on the contrary, to allow each as far as possible to live in security, that is, to preserve for each his natural right to live without harm to himself or to his neighbour. No, I repeat, the object of the State is not to transform reasonable beings into animals or automata; its object is to enable the citizens to develop in security their bodies and their minds, freely to employ their reason. The true end of the State therefore is liberty."

Spinoza sounds a bit old-fashioned, but what other basis is there for a State? How far Britain is removed from the foundation laid down by Spinoza is a question which to try to answer would fill any political economist with despair.

CHAPTER X

THE POWER TO WAR

Gone By and utter *Nothing* are all one;
Why, then, does this creating still go on?
Gone by? What means it? — What a sorry trade!
Making, and making nothing of what's made.
And then this nothing evermore we see
Making pretence a something still to be.
So on it goes, the same dull circle spinning —
'Twere better with the Eternal Void beginning!
— Goethe.

Now to turn aside for a little while from the Foreign Office, and the endeavours of members to elicit reliable information concerning diplomacy and the traffickings of ambassadors, we will fix our attention on the War Office. On July 4th, 1912, the year of the Berlin Conversations, Mr. Amery moved to reduce the army estimates by £100. From the debate which followed we must quote at some length, so that it may be clearly understood how the policy of secrecy works in relation to members " in the know," and those who can only rely on the statements of Ministers; and consequently, with regard to these affairs, do not know until it is too late to protest. Mr. Amery said:

" My object is to draw the attention of the Committee to the gravity of the military situation as a whole, and to the urgent necessity of bringing our military preparations

into some sort of correspondence with our general national policy. The point I wish to insist upon to the Committee is that we should face the logical consequences of the policy to which this country already stands committed with the general approval of the great majority on both sides of the House, and that we should shape our military preparations by the same standard by which our naval preparations are invariably determined — the standard, I mean, of the force we may have to encounter in war. It is common ground to us all in this House that we must at any cost and at all hazards maintain the supremacy of the British navy against the growing menace of German rivalry at sea. It is also common ground, at any rate among the great majority of us, that the domination of Europe by a great military power which is also our greatest rival at sea would in the long run make the retention of our naval supremacy impossible, and consequently the maintenance of France as an independent great Power in Europe is, in the present situation, not only an honourable obligation, but a vital interest to the safety of this country. It is also common ground that in certain eventualities, eventualities which seemed by no means remote less than a year ago, we should be prepared to send a military force to France to assist her. What ought also to be common ground, and no less common ground than those matters I have already mentioned, is that the force thus sent should be adequate to achieve its purpose. If we send a force at all, and it is agreed that we should send it — [Hon. Members: "No!"] It is by the great majority on both sides of this House, and if we send a force at all we should send it to make sure of victory and not to share a defeat."

The members who cried "No" perhaps remembered the replies to Mr. Jowett's questions in March, 1911, when he asked if we were under obligations to send troops to the assistance of France. They were relying no doubt on the negative reply returned by the Minister, and not then thinking of a

secret system which precluded the possibility of a truthful answer to such questions. Be that as it may, Mr. Amery had no compunction in speaking his mind forcibly on the matter. Further, he became prophetic:

"Why should we not have from the Secretary of State for War an equally clear, explicit statement of the relative forces which would take the field in France and Belgium at the outbreak of that same conflict, and an equally clear recognition from him of the duty of the War Office to provide a force which would make it unlikely that a German attack upon France would succeed, and therefore in the highest degree improbable that the attack would ever be attempted? . . . The question I should like the right honourable gentleman to answer is whether or not we have a military force strong enough to render France secure in the event of an attack. Has any right hon. gentleman, addressing this House, ever put that question before us? Do we even pretend to face it? Let me remind the Committee that since the crisis of last year Germany has added very considerably to her navy. Immediately, and with the assent of every one, we responded by a substantial increase of our navy. May I also remind the Committee that since that same crisis Germany has added 80,000 men to her army for the express purpose of strengthening the force that is to march through Belgium to crush the French left. It is upon our Expeditionary Force that the brunt of that march would fall. Has any responsible Minister come down to this House and asked even a single battalion to be added to the strength of our army?"

This was all deeply interesting matter, for Mr. Amery was not remotely connected with the London *Times*, and as members knew from many bouts at question-time, earlier in the year, the military correspondent of the *Times* was the editor of the *Army*

Review, with a room at the War Office. At any rate, Mr. Amery knew so much that some members, who knew no more than Ministers cared to tell them, scoffed defiantly at Mr. Amery's knowledge. One more quotation from his extraordinary speech:

"Our opponents will have the choice of two objectives. They can attempt either to interfere with the despatch of the Expeditionary Force or to cover an invasion, a counter-stroke intended either to bring us to our knees or, at any rate, to prevent a considerable part of the Expeditionary Force from going, and so to clear the field for the German advance through Flanders."

Now if the information Mr. Amery gave to the House was authentic, what becomes of all the indignation of Ministers at Germany's violation of the neutrality and independence of Belgium? General Staffs were hard at work, and it might safely be imputed that they did not leave the Belgian military authorities ignorant of their plans. After Mr. Amery the House heard Sir Reginald Pole-Carew:

"I want to say a word about the Expeditionary Force. We have been told by the hon. member who has just spoken that the preparations of the Government are grossly inadequate, and I entirely agree with him. I do not think that those preparations exist. I did not ask to see that blue envelope because I did not wish to have my tongue tied by anything that it might have contained. Also I want to know why it should be 'secret'; who is it who is to be kept in ignorance? Is it that the people of this country are to be kept in the dark and hoodwinked and not to be allowed to know what the preparations are which are necessary for their safety? Is it that reason? Is it that our enemies are not to know? I venture to think that the most probable enemy we have at the present moment can give the right

hon. gentleman points in information. Is it those we hope to be our allies? I think that is the most dangerous question of the whole lot. If you choose to hoodwink your friends — and I am sorry to say the present Government have done so with great success — if you think you are deceiving your enemies, neither is so bad as to attempt to deceive those whom you hope will be your allies abroad and to whom you are making promises which I do not think you can carry out. I say that is a most dangerous proceeding."

The statements of Mr. Amery and Lt.-Gen. Sir Reginald Pole-Carew were not refuted by the Minister for War; indeed the War Office authorities in the House did not refer at all to the matter of our being pledged to send the Expeditionary Force to the assistance of France in a war with Germany. Small wonder Germany wished to know if she might have a free hand. The Opposition at no time since the autumn of 1910 seemed to be in doubt about our engagement with the French. Only the rank and file of the Liberal party remained ignorant of the full measure of our diplomatic liabilities, and though many back-bench Liberals severely criticised the foreign policy of the Government, the Ministry left them to endure the sneers and jeers of the Opposition "in the know." It would be hard to find in the pages of any book by a German militarist a specimen of grosser contempt for pacifists than that displayed by the Government in those days. Well, there is a kind of loyalty that deserves to be treated with contempt! There was, however, no doubt in French official and press circles as to our engagement. Mr. Buxton, in the Foreign Office debate of July, 1912, quoted from the *Nouvelle Revue*, one of the most prominent Paris reviews, a statement

lurid enough to satisfy the supporters of M. Delcassé:

"We intend to have war. After forty years of a heavily armed peace, we can at last utter this opinion, without the serious readers of a French review shaking in their shoes. . . . France is ready to strike and to conquer as she was not ready forty years ago, and she will not be in four or five years to come, owing to the annual divergent numbers of the birth rate in each country. . . . We, the attacking party, will have arranged with England that their fleet . . . will have followed . . . the remains of the whole German navy into German waters."

Later in July another attack was made on the supplementary naval estimates by Mr. Middlemore, one of the most persistent of the Opposition in questioning the Admiralty as to our preparedness. He said:

"Then we had some criticisms from the Prime Minister. He said the Vote was not to threaten the Triple Alliance. He left Italy entirely out. The Triple Alliance is an association of three Powers to fight under certain circumstances, and I cannot conceive how this can be judiciously, fairly, patriotically, and wisely left out, and if one leaves it out, as far as one's self is concerned, we must remember that we have an *entente,* and that if the three Powers attack France we shall have to defend France, or else the *entente* is a sham which ought never to have been made. It is perfidious Albion again."

Though the question of secret treaties was brought up several times during the long autumn and winter session no information was given by Ministers as to whether we were involved with France or not. The correspondence between the Foreign Secretary and the French ambassador passed in November, but

nothing about it was communicated to the House. At the beginning of the next session, Lord Hugh Cecil raised the question of secret engagements in the debate on the Address. The passages are of such extraordinary interest they are worth quoting in full from the official report:

"Lord Hugh Cecil: 'The right hon. gentleman made reference to foreign affairs, and there is one aspect of them, of not so controversial a character as others, on which I should like to say a few words. The right hon. gentleman and his colleagues are generally believed — I speak with the utmost diffidence in regard to allegations which may not be well founded — to have entered into an engagement, or, to speak more accurately, to have given assurances, which in the contingency of a great European war would involve heavy military obligations on this country. We do not suspect the Prime Minister or the Foreign Secretary of pursuing anything but a pacific foreign policy, and we are far from saying that their policy is in any way an aggressive one; but certainly we believe, if the stories current are true, the policy, if it is not to be regarded as an aggressive one, is adventurous.'

"The Prime Minister: 'Will the noble lord define a little more definitely what he means?'

"Lord Hugh Cecil: 'I am only anxious not to use words which will convey anything but perfectly fair criticism in a matter of this sort, and any ambiguity in what I have said is due to the fact that I do not wish to go beyond the necessities of the case.'

"The Prime Minister: 'I do not complain.'

"Lord Hugh Cecil: 'There is a very general belief that this country is under an obligation, not a treaty obligation, but an obligation arising out of an assurance given by the Ministry in the course of diplomatic negotiations, to send a very large armed force out of this country to operate in Europe. That is the general belief. It would be very

presumptuous of any one who has not access to all the facts in possession of the Government —'

"The Prime Minister: 'I ought to say that it is not true.'

"Lord Hugh Cecil: 'I am very glad to have elicited that explanation. It is certainly widely believed that the Government have engaged in a military policy of an adventurous kind, and I certainly think, if that is right, that it would involve very important considerations when you come to consider what are the military resources of this country. We shall have a debate on that point. It is impossible, as the late Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman was fond of emphasizing, to judge of the military policy of this or any other country, unless you enter into the understandings or obligations involved by its foreign policy. It is quite impossible for this House fully to criticise the military policy of the Government unless they know, at any rate, what it is the Government expect the army to do. It certainly would follow that if you were prepared, as no recent Government has attempted to be prepared, to take an important military part in the early stages of a great European war upon the Continent, the military preparations of other Governments, and of this Government in the earlier years of its tenure of office, were not sufficient. Let me add that I am not indicating or hinting that we ought to have compulsory military service. There is no one who dislikes compulsory military service in any shape or form more than I do, and I should never be convinced in its favour by any argument excepting that which showed it to be urgently necessary for the protection of the country. It is a matter for very grave consideration, if we are getting into a position in which obligations become binding upon us, whether the voluntary system will ultimately bear the strain. I do not believe any Government will adopt a compulsory military service unless the case is strong enough to be brought about by general consent. But what we have to be afraid of is that we will get into such a position that the military

obligations of this country may become so heavy that the voluntary system may break down. I hope that the Foreign Secretary and the Secretary of State for War may be able to co-ordinate the foreign policy and the military policy in order to show how the military policy and the foreign policy fit together — how far the military resources of the country are really sufficient to carry out the obligations thrown upon those resources by the foreign policy of the Government. I think that is a matter of very great importance.' "

Now, why did the Prime Minister say, " I ought to say that it is not true "? Was he shielding the Foreign Secretary, or was he a victim of the despicable system of secrecy that necessitates so much lying in connection with foreign affairs? Was the Prime Minister not informed as to the exchange of letters between Sir Edward Grey and M. Cambon, only a little more than three months before the debate? That is probable, but it must be remembered that the Foreign Secretary in his speech on August 3rd, told the House that the letters were exchanged after the Cabinet had seriously considered the matter. It is so hard to believe the Prime Minister wilfully misled the House.

When the House reached the army estimates, ten days after the debate referred to above, Major-General Sir Ivor Herbert dealt with the agitation of the conscriptionists in the country, and said:

" When I was interrupted just now I was about to quote the words of Lord Roberts with regard to the use of this great force. He said: ' It is to carry out our bounden duty to the Continental alliance for the maintenance of the balance of power in Europe.' It never was contemplated by the present Government and I am certain it never will

be contemplated by them, that we should maintain half a million of men here for use in an expedition on the Continent for the maintenance of the balance of power in Europe. . . . We have no such bounden duty to a Continental Alliance. The Prime Minister the other day interjected an absolute denial when he was questioned by the noble lord, the Member for Oxford, as to whether we had any such bounden duty. He said that there was nothing of the sort. It would be the duty of any Government before entering into such responsibility as that to make it known in this House."

On March 24th, the question of treaty obligations was raised again; two members asked the Prime Minister if the country was under any, and, if so, what, obligation to France to send an armed force in certain contingencies to operate in Europe. To the questions the Prime Minister replied:

"As has been repeatedly stated, this country is not under any obligation not public and known to Parliament which compels it to take part in any war."

There was nothing in the questions about the country being compelled to take part in any war, but the reply was accepted as a complete answer to the questions. He also said, "If war arises between European Powers there are no unpublished agreements which will restrict or hamper the freedom of the Government or of Parliament to decide whether or not Great Britain should participate in a war."

Though the denials of the Prime Minister lulled the fears of his supporters, those "in the know" were not so easily gulled.

Towards the end of March, 1913, Mr. Churchill introduced the navy estimates, and adverted to the

suggestion of a "naval holiday." The estimates amounted to £46,309,300, but the gross expenditure before the year ended rose to £49,625,636. Within a week or two of the First Lord's announcement, the Jingo press of this country poured out a stream of wicked lies to the effect that Germany's answer to Mr. Churchill's offer of a "naval holiday" was a greatly swollen programme. The terror-strikers and the blood-spilling brigade worked hard to raise another panic. In the House the every-man-a-sailor party cried for more ships, more money, and more men. The position in the Mediterranean was very freely discussed. Mr. Lee said:

"There is the vital question of the Mediterranean, and here I would again remind the Committee of the very precise, dramatic and important statement made by the Secretary of the Colonies last autumn, which was endorsed by the Prime Minister, in which he said: 'We shall maintain our position there, both on land and sea, to as full an extent as we have ever done in the past, and in doing so we shall depend upon no alliance or understanding, actual or implied, but upon our own forces.' The First Lord in his Navy Memorandum showed that, in 1915, Austria and Italy combined would have ten 'dreadnaughts,' and that our squadron of four battle cruisers and four armoured cruisers would not suffice to fill our requirements, and that this matter must be reconsidered. We shall have, by that time, no ships to spare in home waters for this purpose. It is, therefore, clear that if this policy is carried out we must practically build a new squadron for service in the Mediterranean, and, what is more, we must begin it immediately."

Lord Charles Beresford suggested that Mr. Churchill must "be trusting to France to guard the Mediterranean." It was, however, Sir C. Kinloch-

Cooke who brought out clearly the peculiarity of our understanding with France. He said:

"The First Lord bids us take comfort in the fact — these are his own words — that,

"'in conjunction with the Navy of France, our Mediterranean Fleet would make a combined force superior to all possible combination.'

"A remarkable statement, look at it how you will, and one I think the Committee will agree somewhat difficult to reconcile with the recent pronouncement of the Prime Minister as to our understanding with France in the matter of armaments. In one case we have the Prime Minister repudiating an obligation on our side of any kind, and in the other we have the First Lord of the Admiralty relying for the safety of our Eastern Empire, our trade and our food supply, upon the assistance which he presumes will be ready at any moment to be given to us by France."

Remarkable, indeed! but not so strange when the whole course of the tortuous business is traced from the time Sir Edward Grey consented to the conversations in 1906. It would have been remarkable if contradiction and evasion had not followed as a consequence of the Foreign Secretary's secret diplomacy. Prevarication seems to have become the first law of secret diplomacy since the Algeciras Act was signed. Still, truth will out, though not always from the mouths of babes and sucklings. In August, 1913, Lord Haldane, in the House of Lords, placed the Prime Minister in an invidious position, when he said:

"I do not think it would be reasonable or wise for any Government to keep a fleet in the Mediterranean equal to the fleets of Austria and Italy combined, because the burden would be simply enormous, and there is no justification for

it. . . . France has in the Mediterranean a fleet almost as great as the fleet of Austria and Italy combined, and if you take into account that we are on the most friendly relations with France, and that our fleet in the Mediterranean is a substantial one, then, looking at the balance, you have a situation which cannot be described as unsatisfactory."

Thus to the First Lord's name must be added the name of the then Lord Chancellor of England as being at variance with the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary as to our obligation to France. But when the Prime Minister in 1911 said that the rumours of war in the summer of that year were "extravagant fictions" and nothing but "pure invention," humble members of the House should not be surprised when Ministers make contradictory statements in connection with diplomacy.

It may be well to take one last look at the "naval holiday" suggestion. In October, 1913, Mr. Churchill went to Manchester, and there he had another fling at his pet scheme for reducing armaments. In the spring, when the estimates were introduced, the Jingoes spread reports of a vast increase in the German estimates. Mr. Churchill recognized that it would not be possible for either Germany or ourselves, even if the two nations were agreed, to stand still for a whole year unless other Powers could be persuaded to do likewise, but he anticipated that if Great Britain and Germany took the lead in approaching other European Powers, their great influence would insure good prospects of success. Nevertheless he said:

"Now we say, while there is plenty of time, in all friendship and sincerity to our great neighbour Germany: 'If you will put off beginning your two ships for twelve months

from the ordinary date when you would have begun them, we will put off beginning our four ships, in absolute good faith, for exactly the same period.' "

That seemed to the layman a fairly reasonable proposal. But was it feasible? If we glance at the figures of the Triple Entente and the Triple Alliance we shall see that Great Britain was in a position to say to Germany, " After the scandalous way you have been treated by Entente diplomacy, the Government is determined to show that its fine words on good relations and peaceful intentions mean something substantial; therefore it will bring pressure to bear on the partners of the Triple Entente to desist from building ships in the year 1914." With the French fleet in the Mediterranean, and the northern and western coasts of France undefended, the proposition would not have been so Quixotic as it appears. Anyway, at the time it was worth any sacrifice to convince Germany that our policy was not one of isolating her in Europe. The figures for gross expenditure and for new construction were well above a two Power standard in favour of the Triple Entente:

GROSS EXPENDITURE, 1913

Great Britain ...	£49,625,636	Germany	£23,030,633
France	21,292,422	Austria	7,332,703
Russia	25,392,784	Italy	13,333,762
Triple Entente ..	£96,310,842	Triple Alliance .	£43,697,098

NEW CONSTRUCTION, 1913

Great Britain ...	£16,883,875	Germany	£11,010,883
France	8,893,064	Austria	3,288,937
Russia	12,082,516	Italy	3,933,000
Triple Entente ..	£37,859,455	Triple Alliance .	£18,232,820

It is a pity Mr. Churchill was not in a position to tell the people of England that he had arranged with France to leave the Mediterranean to her fleet while England's looked after the Channel and the North Sea. If he could have broken down the barriers of the criminal policy of secrecy, and have been perfectly frank about the naval position, he might have carried the vast majority of the people with him. He might have said that the panicky reports of the spring with regard to the swollen estimates of the German Government were not true, and that it would be worth while removing all suspicion from the minds of German statesmen; but that this could be done only by a bold declaration that we shall not build any ships this year,— or next, if it could not be arranged for this year. Hidebound tradition, however, held him fast in its grip; and his proposal only served to blind those of his fellow-countrymen who prefer to do anything but study these affairs for themselves. As it was, the suggestion made no headway in England and the Germans took it for a sorry joke.

In the spring of 1914, the debates which were raised on the defence of the Empire and the strategic position of the forces in the Mediterranean, revealed the profound dissatisfaction of well-informed members as to the value of the Entente, and the policy of the "Commander of the Forces" as to foreign affairs generally. The navy estimates reached the colossal figure of £52,261,703, and many men began to wonder whether ententes were not after all fearfully expensive luxuries; particularly when the armament burden was so unfairly apportioned. When one partner in an entente, with little risk of a land

war, has to spend twice as much on her navy as either of her two partners, it is time to ask what return will she ever get for the crushing burden thrown upon her workers? But secret understandings and entangling alliances must be paid for, no matter who objects, and no matter how much lying such a policy may entail. When the Foreign Office hands over the fate of a nation to military and naval experts, and the people permit a system which gives the Foreign Secretary the power of a "Commander of the Forces," and lets him conduct his business without Parliamentary control,— then the nation must not complain when it is asked to settle the bill of costs. But it should be remembered that new generations will have to bear their share of the burden. The people of the next generation will look at the history of this terrible war with calm deliberation. They will not be blinded by the passions let loose by our foreign policy during the past eight years, which make it almost impossible for men of to-day, fighting for their national existence, to see the long sequence of error, mendacity, and stupidity which has brought this awful crime to fruition. But reason will return; other views will replace those which are dominant to-day; and history will repeat itself in this case as surely as it has done in the case of every other war. Then, in the process of reconsideration, the verdict will be given against all those forces which have brought the nations of Europe to the slaughter and devastation of an Armageddon. A rider will accompany that verdict, blaming secret diplomacy, the Jingo press, the armament ring, and the polyglot gangs of concessionaires, for embroiling this nation in the strife.

Some more questions about our obligations to engage in military operations on the Continent must be recorded here. The Foreign Secretary replied to both of them. The first one was put on April 28th, 1914:

"Mr. King asked the Secretary for Foreign Affairs whether he is aware that demands have been recently put forward for a further military understanding between the Powers of the Triple Entente with a view to concerted action on the Continent in case of certain eventualities; and whether the policy of this country still remains one of freedom from all obligations to engage in military operations on the Continent?

"The Secretary (Sir Edward Grey): 'The answer to the first part of the question is in the negative, and as regards the latter part the position now remains the same as stated by the Prime Minister in answer to a question in this House on the 24th, March, 1913.'"

The Prime Minister had said the country was under no obligation; there were no agreements which would restrict or hamper the freedom of the Government or of Parliament.

Then two questions were put on June 11th, 1914:

"Mr. King asked whether any naval agreement has been recently entered into between Russia and Great Britain; and whether any negotiations, with a view to enable agreement, have recently taken place or are now pending between Russia and Great Britain?

"Sir William Byles asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he can make any statement with regard to an alleged new naval agreement between Great Britain and Russia; how far such agreement would affect our relations with Germany; and will he lay papers?

"Sir Edward Grey: 'The hon. member for North

Somerset asked a similar question last year with regard to the military forces, and the hon. member for North Salford asked a similar question also on the same day, as he has done again to-day. The Prime Minister then replied that, if war arose between European Powers, there were no unpublished agreements which would restrict or hamper the freedom of the Government or of Parliament to decide whether or not Great Britain should participate in a war. That answer covers both the questions on the paper. It remains as true to-day as it was a year ago. No negotiations have since been concluded with any Power that would make the statement less true. No such negotiations are in progress, and none are likely to be entered upon so far as I can judge. But if any agreement were to be concluded that made it necessary to withdraw or modify the Prime Minister's statement of last year, which I have quoted, it ought, in my opinion, to be, and I suppose that it would be, laid before Parliament.' "

Less than *two months* before the outbreak of hostilities, this was the way the British House of Commons was treated by Ministers of a Government which began its career in 1906, under the old Liberal flag that bore the motto, " Peace, Retrenchment, and Reform "! Well might the socialists cry at meetings when Liberals have asked for the democratic forces to pull together, " Liberals, forsooth! your Government has never been Liberal since the Liberal Leaguers got control of the Cabinet! " Only those who have borne the brunt of the political fighting in the country know how hard the task has been to keep the old Radicals in the fighting line while this Government has been enmeshed in the entanglements of a Continental system through its mad imperial desires and its secret foreign policy. Twitted by the Conservatives for " a meek sub-

serviency" in the division lobby, and a "grotesque impotency" under an autocratic Ministry; and, on the other hand, charged by the socialists as supporters of gangs of British and foreign capitalists syndicated for the business of exploiting the natives of Africa and Asia (besides acquiescing in the nefarious designs of the armament ring to rob the wealth-producers of the country) members who sacrificed some of their principles in order to get land reform, constitutional reform, and franchise reform, found in the end that such benefits as they had gained were mere dross as considered against the crime of participating in a European war.

So late as June 29th, 1914, the true position of the House in relation to foreign affairs was described by Mr. Swift MacNeill, in the debate on the Foreign Office Vote. He said:

"If we are not to know the reality of things it would be better if we had no debates in this House on foreign policy. Member after member gets up and says what to the best of his information are the true facts of the case, but none of these hon. members are furnished with official information as they would be furnished with on any matter of domestic policy. I think it is an amazing thing to see how the House is crowded on matters of naval defence, and to see how this House of Commons allows itself to be treated as a child in matters which are the springs of policy themselves — in matters which create wars, and for which these naval defences are themselves required. It would be immensely better if there were fewer millions spent on the Navy, and there was an open public policy as to our relations with other Powers. . . . I say that the Houses of Parliament so far as foreign policy is concerned are absolutely impotent. . . . This House of Commons has no power to declare war or to make peace. These preroga-

tives of the Crown are practically invested in the Ministers, and exercised by them. In foreign affairs they are not responsible. The Ministry of England can declare war to-day without consulting the House of Commons. Perhaps it will be said that is all right, and that the House of Commons has the power of stopping supplies. Yes, but no House of Commons with ordinary patriotic feeling would dream of stopping supplies when that means the maintenance and protection of soldiers abroad, whatever may be the facts of the war. Therefore, the Cabinet has power to make peace and to declare war; to make this country enter into the very highest and most momentous international transactions, and has a power which it has not in connection with the narrowest turnpike Bill. Can any one imagine a Committee of Parliament, such as the Cabinet is, should be able to put the country under the most intense national obligation, and to bind the lives and destinies and properties of the subject?"

Outside of Germany the bureaucracy of Berlin has had no more implacable opponents than the Radicals of Britain. For nearly twenty years it has been pointed out in speeches and pamphlets as the great Continental stumbling block in the road to a fuller and deeper understanding among the workers of the great Powers. The whole system of Government at Berlin has been utterly disliked by the progressive people of this country, because it practically lies in the hands of a special set of men dominated by the Kaiser. Under his will the bureaucracy shaped the course of peace and war and social affairs, while little or no political power rested in the hands of the vast majority of the German people. Absolute in all things that concern the destiny of a people, the Kaiser stood for all those economic and political abominations the British people had fought in their

land for hundreds of years to overthrow; grievances they had been to some extent successful in removing. Have they then fought in vain? What is the position in this year of 1915? A Cabinet with absolute power to plunge the nation within a week into a European war, to carry out obligations the House of Commons were told less than eight weeks before hostilities commenced did not exist; but which the Government confessed, when it was too late, were entered into more than eight years ago. The end of our constitutional struggle, then, is to set up an absolute Cabinet in place of an absolute monarch and an all-powerful House of Lords.

CHAPTER XI

THE WORK OF DIPLOMATISTS

"THERE is another great gulf which separates the differences between Austria and Russia, howsoever they may be decided, from the affairs of the Western Powers. Britain and Germany, Italy and France are at peace. They desire peace; they need peace; there is no ground of quarrel between them — absolutely none. They have only to continue to pursue together the simple and sincere policy they have been following, they have only to trust one another in this time of trouble, they have only to take hold of one another's hands in confidence and good-will, and there is no power under the sky that can drive them from the paths of sanity and honour. No one can measure the consequences of a general war. The original cause would soon be lost in the greater and more terrible issues which would be raised. . . . The only epitaph which history could write on such a catastrophe would be that this whole generation of men went mad and tore themselves to pieces."

— Winston Churchill, November, 1912.

That epitaph will serve for the stone that will be raised by our heirs on the grave of our madness. Never was peace needed by the peoples of Europe so urgently as in June, 1914. But men went mad in July; statesmen led the way, pushed by diplomatists, and kings followed; not along the paths of sanity and honour, but into those terrible labyrinths where reason is abandoned by all who enter in. In 1914 the economic and political condition of Britain

and Ireland was serious enough to employ fully all the wisdom of our statesmen. Declining trade; grave labour trouble approaching; the revolt in the army; Ulster's preparation for civil war; sedition in the Privy Council and in India; riots in South Africa and Dublin; were only some of the outstanding features of our own disorders.

When Parliament met on February 10th, 1914, the King's speech contained two striking points on foreign affairs:

"My relations with Foreign Powers continue to be friendly. I am happy to say that my negotiations, both with the German Government and the Ottoman Government as regards matters of importance to the commercial and industrial interests of this country in Mesopotamia, are rapidly approaching a satisfactory issue, while questions which have long been pending with the Turkish Empire in respect to regions bordering on the Persian Gulf are in a fair way towards an amicable settlement."

There seemed to be no international friction in Europe; the chancelleries gave no indication of the coming storm. Even the Balkans seemed to be at rest. At home all was strife. The Government, entering on its fourth year of office under the Parliament Act, had to deal for the third and last time with the Home Rule Bill. Many other highly contentious measures, in various stages of legislative development, were to be dealt with. The church, the land, and the ascendency parties were intensely alarmed; and urgent was their work in the country to forestall at any cost the power of the Parliament Act to pass measures against the opposition of the House of Lords. The Unionists had succeeded on two occasions in turning the House of Commons

into a disorderly place; and threats were made again and again to use similar methods in the new session. The old ways of reason and argument were fast giving place to riot and clamour. No one could look forward to the passing of the Home Rule Bill with certainty that the House would conduct itself decorously. Another pot-house brawl was the least that could be expected. For the time being, foreign affairs and armaments were forgotten. In the recess some Ministers had, however, referred to these questions in their speeches. Lord Haldane at Hoxton on January 15th, 1914, said:

"During the eight years in which the Government had been in office the peace of Europe had been preserved. The Great Powers had grouped themselves; the piling up of armaments had gone on; we had increased our armaments; and Europe was an armed camp, but an armed camp in which peace not only prevailed, but in which the indications were that there was a far greater prospect of peace than ever there was before. No one wanted war. If armaments were piled up it was not for aggression but for fear. That would go in time, and would certainly go if the beneficent tendency of the last few years was kept up, and if this country preserved its policy while remaining in one of the groups, yet seeking to bring about good relations between that group and the other group. It was with pleasure that he thought of the great power for good of the two statesmen in Europe, Dr. Bethmann-Hollweg and Sir Edward Grey. These two had worked for all they were worth, and we had seen the fruits of it during a period of great anxiety and crisis, when probably without that group system we might have had a conflagration in Europe. These groups had a new value and meaning. They did not exist to break the peace, but to keep the peace."

This only about six months before Europe was

engulfed in the horror of the centuries! There was then no doubt in Lord Haldane's mind as to the way the two heads (Sir Edward Grey and Dr. von Bethmann-Hollweg) of the armed groups, the Entente and the Alliance, had worked for the peace of Europe. No one wanted war! The groups did not exist to break the peace but to keep the peace! It is like a grotesque nightmare now to read such a speech, delivered only a few short months before the greatest nations of Europe plunged into war. To read that speech, now that nine nations are at war, and try to get one gleam of hope for democracy out of all the gloom of battlefields is a task of utter despair. Every sophism, every platitude, every pretext of statesman, diplomatist, soldier and sailor for armaments, groups, and treaties has been smashed to atoms. Truth, like a battered drab, in burning shame hides her head in the shadows of an empty brothel. Either Lord Haldane knew then he was not speaking the truth or numbers of British journalists who have written on diplomacy since the war began are brazen liars. Both cannot be right; but as Lord Haldane, with all his political faults, is one of the great intellectual forces in Britain, and would be apt to know what he was talking about, the jingoists of the gutter-press may be left to enjoy what they earn. Lord Haldane was a bad prophet; and though he told us so recently as July, 1915, that he " was bound to make friendly speeches," he might have had the courage to tell the country earlier all he learned in Berlin in 1912. Here is the curse of the whole despicable business of diplomacy: a man like Lord Haldane must make friendly speeches (which in this case meant hiding the truth) when

he had not the "smallest doubt about the imperative necessity of our taking part in the war,"— as he told us in July, 1915.

It is almost a futile task to attempt to reconcile the utterances of our statesmen made before July, 1914, with those delivered since the war began. To those who would urge the excuse that members of a Cabinet cannot speak straightforwardly on delicate questions of foreign affairs for fear of precipitating an international crisis, it might be asked what particular benefit have the people derived from the policy of secrecy and hyperbole? If the conduct of foreign affairs precludes the possibility of the truth being given to the people, is it necessary to mislead them by making friendly speeches? Would it not be better to preserve an ironclad silence? Why tell the people anything about foreign affairs and armaments? Perhaps the policy of the future will be: get the money and say nothing. A rhetorical loss might at any rate mean a dialectical gain.

Take another instance of where statesmen's utterances before the war come in conflict with the screeds of jingoists. Sir Edward Grey spoke at Manchester in February, 1914, on International Affairs and Armaments. He said:

"While British naval expenditure is a great factor in the naval expenditure of Europe, the forces which are making that expenditure increase generally are really beyond our control. I admit that we had some responsibility originally in building the first dreadnought. No doubt we are open to the criticism that we set the example. . . . At the present moment what is causing the increase of dreadnoughts in Europe? It is going on without reference to British expenditure. The ships which Germany is going to lay

down in this coming year are being laid down to carry out a naval programme, a naval law (which cannot be altered without the consent of the Reichstag), which was laid down many years ago and a naval law which would not be altered this year by anything we could do. When you come to the shipbuilding of France, Austria, and Italy, and ask yourself why they are building dreadnoughts, I do not think you can say in the case of any one of them that they are building dreadnoughts because of British shipbuilding. Whatever motives they have, it is not competition with us in particular which is causing them to build dreadnoughts, and if we were to decide to build nothing this year or next year, I do not believe it would cause any alteration in the shipbuilding of the other great Powers of Europe as a direct consequence."

In the first place this statement proves conclusively how preposterous was the notion of Mr. Churchill's naval holiday, and how absurd is the grudge of the Jingo press against Germany for not adopting the suggestion of Mr. Churchill. In the second place Sir Edward Grey laid the spectre of Germany's violation of her naval pledges to us, and the surreptitious acceleration of her naval programme. In the third place it proves positively that Germany was not building against us, and that we were blameful in forcing the armament pace.

One has only to go to *Hansard* or the public prints to find speeches of Ministers which contradict ninety-nine per cent. of the stuff published against Germany as to her foreign affairs, naval and military development, literature, music and science. But what is to be done with a public largely fed on the garbage printed in most of the British dailies and weeklies now that war is a paying game for jingoists? It was bad enough in times of panic before

hostilities began; but now every day in the week the public is brutally assaulted by columns in the press more dangerous to the British people than all the Kaiser's legions past and to come. At the dinner of the Foreign Press Association, May, 1914, Sir Edward Grey said the press "controlled the atmosphere, and the temperature of the atmosphere would decide what policy it might be possible for Governments to carry out." Whether or not the foreign press controlled the atmosphere at the time of the Balkan crisis, there is no doubt about the control of atmosphere of the British press now. Decent journalism lies under a cloud of suspicion and dare not deal thoroughly with all the causes which brought about the war. The worst features of Prussian administration are rampant in the land, and a free press has been ousted by a press free chiefly to lie and traduce honourable men. But it is not the people's fault that the culture of frenzy and fright is the order of the day; it is the fault of the Government. The people have not been given a chance to select a culture compatible with true liberty. Slaves must take the culture their masters impose. If there was one reform more than another needed in Britain in the spring of 1914 it was education. Nationally not one-half as much was spent on education as on the navy. But the navy was all right. And the army was ready. The Minister for War in the Commons on March 10th said, "We stand well for the purposes of immediate war on any basis which you may consider. . . ." The First Lord of the Admiralty told the House of Commons that forty merchant ships had been armed with two 4.7 guns apiece. On the debate on the Naval Position

in the Mediterranean, March 18th, Sir Edward Grey was sure "the good understandings which have existed and which exist between ourselves and France and Russia have undoubtedly during the last troublous times contributed to the peace of Europe. . . . We consider that they make for peace." The debates in the Commons on the Army and Navy were of deep interest. Mr. Amery intervened again and dealt with the position in Europe:

"It is not a question of our dealing single-handed with one of the great European Powers. We have been committed by our foreign policy to the support of a certain grouping of Powers and it is our duty to supply not only naval strength but military strength to prevent that grouping being broken down. What good would it be to us winning a victory at sea if our allies were crushed and defeated on land?"

Then in the debate on the Navy Estimates, March 18th, 1914, the question of our position in Europe was raised by several members. Lord Charles Beresford dealt severely with the First Lord:

"I ask the First Lord: Are we going to trust to France to defend us in the Mediterranean? That is a very definite question. If we are, what are we to give France in return? It has come out quite lately that we have not got an Expeditionary Force that we could send away to France if France needed it. The Secretary for War could not answer that question, and we know — everybody knows — we could not afford to send that Expeditionary Force away if England and France were engaged in a war against some one else. I say that is a very dangerous position. We are metaphorically to sell our friends. They are to look after our enormous interests in the Mediterranean because we

cannot have a fleet there. What are we going to do for France? It may be very disagreeable but we are liable with these ententes and alliances. When we had command of the sea and trusted to our own right hands we wanted no ententes and alliances and the British Fleet was a factor for peace."

Yes, indeed: and Lord Charles Beresford was not alone in casting back a glance to the days of Britain's splendid isolation. There were many men who heartily disliked the international prospect, but on reflection they consoled themselves with the assurances so often given by the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary that we were under no obligation to give armed support to France or Russia. In the Commons Sir Mark Sykes and Mr. Herbert delivered speeches full of foreboding as to Russian influence and aspiration. When the question of troops for Ulster was raised, Colonel Burn asked the Foreign Secretary "whether in the event of troops being employed in Ulster over an extended period, the Government are in a position to carry out our military understanding with France." Sir Edward Grey said the Prime Minister could not "undertake to reply to a purely hypothetical question."

It was a stormy session and the House lost heavily in dignity while the Government gained little in prestige. The party of law and order preached sedition and anarchy in the House and in the country, and the young bloods of Toryism at the same time planned to stop procedure by shouting Ministers down. Manners fell to the depths of vulgarity, and wisdom in disgust often flew away and found refuge in the jug-and-bottle corners of lowly pubs.

How was it with Germany before the murder of

the archduke? First, let us avoid making the mistake of many publicists that every speech of Kaiser or Chancellor which bristled with phrases of Treitschke was aimed at Britain. Bernhardi has told us war with England was hopeless from the German position, and he can be accepted as an authority. It was hopeless. With our navy for the North Sea, and France guarding the Mediterranean, no one save a Jingo lunatic could really believe for a moment that the time had come for Germany to try her strength with us. Bernhardi said, "The English Government knows well that Germany cannot think on her side of attacking England, because such an attempt is in itself hopeless." Furthermore, in the report sent in the summer of 1913 from Berlin to M. Pichon, the then French Minister for Foreign Affairs (see No. 5, in French Yellow Book), we are told:

"It is hardly likely that Germany will take the risk if France can make it clear to the world that the Entente Cordiale and the Russian Alliance are not merely diplomatic fictions but realities which exist and will make themselves felt. *The English fleet inspires a wholesome terror.* It is well known, however, that victory on sea will leave everything in suspense. On land alone can a decisive issue be obtained."

What then was Germany's special aim in Europe in the spring of last year? Russia. Most undoubtedly; and Germany made no pretence of hiding her design. Russia was regarded as a peril. Dr. Dillon himself said, "Among the new or newly intensified currents of political life now traversing the Continent of Europe, none can be compared in its cul-

tural and political bearings and influence with the rivalry between the Slav and Teutonic races." The feeling in Russia was quite as deep as it was in Germany. "Europe is not big enough for both Slav and German aspirations," was the way a Russian put it two winters ago. Men who are steeped in the atmosphere of the chancelleries are prone to give their opinions in the colours of the last foreign office they have visited, and that is the only way one can explain so much of the bewildering rubbish written in the British reviews since the beginning of the war. It might have been planned by Germany to force Russia into a conflict; Germany might have arranged with Austria to take the murder of the archduke as the favourable moment for forcing Russia's hand; Germany might have counted at one time on the Triple Alliance holding good in the event of war; but that Germany was prepared last year for a struggle in which she and Austria alone would meet the Triple Entente and Belgium, is an assumption which the facts do not support. At least as early as the beginning of July, 1914, when the tip came from Rome to London, Germany must have known for certain that she could not count on Italy. There were, however, many other problems of a political nature that might have urged the Kaiser and his friends to find a solution of them in a big war. Social Democracy was one, and a serious one. In the forefront of their programme, at the last General Election, was placed, Abolition of Compulsory Military Service; then the vote of Social Democracy increased by 1,250,000, and the party became the biggest in the Reichstag. At bye-elections the Kaiser saw Social Democracy win its way into Junker

strongholds. Moreover, the problem of the unemployed taxed the wit of the bureaucrats at headquarters to the utmost; and during the winter of 1913 they did not know how to grapple effectively with it. Germany was faced with another winter of still greater trade depression, and the position may be imagined by what the *Berliner Tageblatt* said then about unemployment: "Things are the same all over the Empire. Whoever looks about our building-places, factories, offices, and public businesses knows that work is often going on only at half-power,— that is, where it has not ceased altogether. At the present moment, dismissals not only of ordinary workmen, but also of clerks and other employés, are more numerous than probably at any time in the past." Prices were rising higher and higher; discontent was growing in every district; and the "enemy at home," to use Prince Henry of Prussia's phrase for Social Democracy, were extremely restless.

Furthermore, the dislike of Prussian arrogance on the part of the southern German States had been growing in intensity since the days of Prince Hohenlohe. Bavaria was not seeing eye to eye with Prussia in the all-military ambitions of the Kaiser. There was not that unanimity in the Empire that some writers believe; and in many small States there was grave discontent when the new taxation for military purposes was imposed, not so long ago. Saxony, Württemberg, and Bavaria were not happy under Prussian rule; they had lost much of their individuality, their ambitions and characteristics, in the confederation. There may be more than a few who live in these smaller States who will not spend many

days in mourning if Prussia is overthrown in this struggle.

Let us for a moment look at the territorial question. All imperial ambition on the Continent must have a western goal. Germany with a population of 65,000,000 finds her way blocked by Holland with a home population of only 6,000,000, and colonies containing over 800,000 square miles; finds her way blocked by Belgium with a population of 7,500,000; and again finds her way blocked by France with a population of 40,000,000. These countries standing in the way of her westward progress all have far superior maritime advantages; besides, Germany has no outlet to the Mediterranean. Her geographical position, for a great maritime power, is not dignified; so German opinion has often said. Indeed it has been pointed out by great merchants in articles on this matter that international justice, whatever that may be, is not meted out to Germany for her gigantic development in ships and sea-borne commerce. The German says, " You people don't know what we have done; we have two lines, the Hamburg-American and the North German Lloyd, with a tonnage of over 2,000,000." To this the German thinks the great western nations reply, " Build your *Vaterlands* in the Baltic, and be content with Hamburg and Bremen for your ports, though you have to spend an extra day in getting to the Atlantic. Don't come bothering us with your worries." Nevertheless, it is just as well these nations should realize the *Vaterland* is typical of Germany's ambition. She was built for the west. Consider Germany's disadvantages, those under which she must compete, and then think of the recent rise

of Russia and her unrivalled resources. Russia also must push west. She is no more content to build the fleets of her maritime dreams on the Baltic than Germany is to build those of her present need. Russia is pressing Germany, urging her west, further west, every year; and the enormous weight of 140,000,000 of people in European Russia, with almost unparalleled attractions for financiers, is a battering-ram the Teutonic people cannot withstand for long, without something breaking. But the great western maritime nations say, "What we have, we hold." Germany replies, "Then we must have a look at your title deeds, for Russia intends to have a look at ours."

The position in France was chaotic enough to inspire the Kaiser with hope of tackling Russia without effective French aid. It is, however, not likely that the Kaiser accepted all the statements of the gossips as to French unpreparedness. True, there were the revelations in the French Senate, and the campaign against the new conscription laws. Certainly France was looking forward to bigger strikes than those she had left behind. New conscription laws might help to avert industrial catastrophes such as that which threatened France in Briand's day; but on the other hand labour was making certain that in the future no strike would go off at half-cock. Jaurés was a power for peace, and always an outspoken critic of French foreign policy. It was Jaurés more than any one who brought about the downfall of Delcassé in 1905.

Italy was suffering from a most unpopular war in Africa. There were scandals connected with military administration; the unpreparedness of the army

to meet European complications was notorious. The greatest strike she had ever known had alarmed the authorities from one end of the country to another; and, what is of some consequence, when journalists and statesmen were praising Italy for her neutrality, anti-Austrian feeling was far more evident than was her chagrin at the action of France and the speech of M. Poincaré about the seizure of French steamers by the Italians.

It has been said by Italian statesmen that Austria wished to send in August, 1913, an ultimatum to Servia, "substantially identical with that sent last July," and that the Marquis di San Giuliano communicated the information to the Italian ex-Premier, Signor Giolitti. Italy, however, declined to support her ally in a war against Servia, and Germany also refused to be a party to that note. *Post bellum* literature, of many colours, contains a great number of striking contradictions. In the official documents published by the Governments not only are there to be found innumerable alterations of dates and suppressions of facts, but also stupid errors which reveal peculiar kinks and cavities in the diplomatic memory. Take, for instance, the revelations of the Italian ex-Premier as to the communication of the Marquis di San Giuliano in August, 1913, that Austria then desired to send to Servia an ultimatum "substantially identical with that sent last July."

M. Barrère, the French ambassador at Rome, on July 27th, 1914, sent to his Government the following information:

"The Marquis di San Giuliano returned to Rome this evening, and I saw him immediately after his arrival. He spoke to me of the contents of the Austrian note, and as-

sured me that he had had no previous knowledge of them whatever. He was well aware that the note was to be vigorous and energetic in character, but he had no idea that it could take such a form. I asked him if it was true, as is stated in certain newspapers, that in this connexion he had expressed in Vienna approval of Austrian action, and had given the assurance that Italy would fulfil her duties as an ally towards Austria. He replied, 'In no way have we been consulted; we have been told nothing whatever. We have therefore had no reason to make any communication of this nature in Vienna.'"

The Marquis meant, presumably, that a "substantially identical" note had been submitted to him by the Austrian Government in August, 1913, but he had no diplomatic recollection of it when he saw the note of July, 1914. So free from all the prejudices of common life are the minds of diplomatists, that Austria's wish to crush Servia made no difference at all to the friendship of the Powers of the Triple Alliance; their relations moved along as smoothly after the knowledge of Austria's desire as before. Italy in all probability knew exactly what the true state of affairs was, and as she was not ready to undertake the cost of another war, in which Austria would find not Servia, but Russia, the dominant force arrayed against her, Italy played for safety. Her wisdom in that was counted for righteousness by those countries which benefited through her ulterior motives; then the Entente Powers were so delighted with her decision to remain neutral that they all desired to let her have the honour of joining the forces of the Allies in the field.

After a period of diplomatic huckstering with Germany and Austria — whom she could not sup-

port in an offensive war — she decided to make a seventh against her former allies and joined in the fray " for the sake of honour, justice, and Christianity."

The revelations of Italian diplomatists seem to throw the onus of instigating the war on Austria; an unpopular thing to do, for the information of Austria's desire to send an ultimatum to Servia in August, 1913, makes it awkward for those who insist on placing the authorship of the Austrian note of July 24th, 1914, on the Kaiser.

Racial feeling in Austria was deep. Her many different races were not living in peace and contentment under the Dual Monarchy. Industrial depression in the large towns was quite as severe as it was in Germany. Vienna had become fretfully expectant of riots. High prices and low wages were problems which gave the Government grave concern; and the housing difficulties in Vienna were growing every day in intensity, more alarming indeed to the Imperial Government than Narodna Odbrana. Austria was threatened with as grave an internal crisis as any country ever faced.

And Russia, the latter-day heaven of French and British financiers. How was it with Russia? Barricades on Monday, with yells of " Down with the Government! " and solidarity on Tuesday with hallelujahs of " Freedom for Slavs! " A change so electrical that it completely paralyzed the French. From strikes such as Russia had never known, to one complete accord in twenty-four hours, was one of the most mysterious conjuring tricks any government ever accomplished with a people. No one in western Europe believed the Little Father and the

icon were so powerful. It must have startled the German Emperor and Count Berchtold out of their diplomatic wits! What had become of all the unrest in the army? What about Russia's largely-advertised unpreparedness for war? How could a country whose financial condition was said to be desperate, be enthusiastic for war? And so soon after the crushing defeat inflicted by Japan! No wonder many marvelled at the change. This, the country that sent her ships down the North Sea a few years ago when her Admirals were scared to death by a lot of innocent trawlers! This, the Russia whose monarch not so long ago dare not land in England! Where were anarchism, nihilism, and the intellectuals? Was Siberia forgotten?

To the keen observer of European affairs, not affected in his views with the schemes and intrigues of the chancelleries, the change which overcame the workers in the different nations during July was most amazing. From predictions of tumbling thrones to war-like unanimity in a few days, beat all the aspirations of Monarchial Leagues to smithereens. But how many publicists, now so busy whitewashing Entente Powers, realize all those great political causes which underlie the actions of all the Powers in July, 1914? It is not remembered that Russia, not so many years ago, was regarded in British diplomatic circles as a danger to the peace of Europe, and a Power beyond the European pale, inimical to western civilization. As our diplomatists looked upon Russia in Lord Granville's day, so have German diplomatists looked upon her; at least since she fostered the growth of Slav power in the Balkans. Germany's fears of Russia to-day are the fears of

Britain in our fathers' time. Germany knew that it was predicted that the Slav would be all ready in 1916 to try conclusions with her. Who would attempt the task of trying to convince German and Austrian diplomacy that Russia diplomacy was not at the back of the Greater Servian propaganda? It is all very well to concentrate public attention on the task that lies before Britain now, but some one must think of what the future is to be. And it is not wise to hide the diplomatic welter behind this business from the people who are supposed, by short-sighted journalists and politicians, to pass from it into an era of peace, and milk and honey. Alison told us long ago that the civilization of western Europe must finally fall before the fresh vigour of the rude but mighty hordes of Russia and northern Asia. Nietzsche, too, was conscious of that probability. All highly industrialized civilizations must in the long run go under to millions of pastoralists. It is not so long since deeply religious men and women in Britain prayed earnestly to be protected from the power of Russia. The Russia of Tolstoy and of Dostoevsky is not the Russia we have to fear, or the one Germany fears. It is the Russia of grand dukes, exploiting financiers, corrupt bureaucrats, and a diplomacy which aims at Slav domination in Central Europe!

Now, to look into the White Paper and try to unravel the maze of diplomatic entanglements. The Austrian archduke was murdered at Serajevo, June 28th. There followed a strange diplomatic silence for three weeks. The first despatch in the White Paper is dated July 20th, and it was sent by Sir Edward Grey to our ambassador at Berlin, not Vienna.

What had been taking place in the chancelleries since June 28th? The Austrian royalty had, after many family squabbles, buried the archduke, and by the time our Foreign Office began despatch-making, the world outside diplomacy had begun to forget that there had been an archduke to bury. Not until July 27th, was the question of Austria and Servia referred to in the House of Commons. Then Sir Edward Grey told the House that he had proposed a conference the day before. He was asked by Mr. Lawson if it were true that the German Emperor had that morning accepted the principle of mediation which the Foreign Secretary had proposed. Sir Edward Grey's reply to that question was, " I understand that the German Government are favourable to the idea of mediation in principle as between Austria-Hungary and Russia, but that as to the particular proposal of applying that principle by means of a conference which I have described to the House, the reply of the German Government has not yet been received."

Now let us see where we are. The special fleet mobilization took place on July 13th. In despatch No. 66, French Yellow Book, M. de Fleuriau, French *chargé d'affaires* at London, informed his Government on July 27th that:

" The attitude of Great Britain is confirmed by the postponement of the demobilization of the Fleet. The First Lord of the Admiralty took this measure quietly on Friday on his own initiative."

That Friday was July 24th; the day after the Austrian note was delivered to the Servian Government.

The fleet sailed from Weymouth on July 27th: as the *Times* of that day said, "a welcome earnest of our intention to be ready for any course which the national interests may render desirable." The Foreign Secretary had been in communication with ambassadors since July 20th. Not for a week after the first despatch was sent did the House of Commons get a word from the Foreign Secretary about the business; and then the gist of his statement was that he had proposed a conference of four Powers, France, Italy, Germany, and Great Britain. But a great deal had happened before he made that proposal. Though he told the House that Britain had no title to interfere so long as the dispute was one between Austria-Hungary and Servia alone, he was fully conscious when he saw the German ambassador on July 20th, that a war between any of the great Powers over Servia would be detestable, and the German ambassador "agreed wholeheartedly in this sentiment." On the 23rd, Sir Edward saw Count Mensdorff and learned from him that all would depend upon Russia, but that he was under the impression that the attitude in Petersburg had not been favourable recently. The Austrian note to Servia was published on the 24th.

The despatch of July 24th from Petersburg, No. 6 in the White Paper, is a document of great significance. Our ambassador in this despatch says that M. Sazonof, the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs, said some of Austria's demands were quite impossible of acceptance. He hoped that the British Government would not fail to proclaim their solidarity with Russia and France. The French ambassador at the same time told our representative that

France would fulfil all the obligations entailed by her alliance with Russia. When the British ambassador pointed out that Britain's interests in Servia were nil, and that he saw no reason why Russia should expect any declaration of solidarity from Britain to support Russia and France unconditionally by force of arms, M. Sazonof replied that Britain must not forget that the general European question was involved; Britain could not efface herself from the problems then at issue. Our ambassador said that M. Sazonof and the French representative continued to press him for a declaration of complete solidarity. The Russian Minister said that he thought Russian mobilization would at any rate have to be carried out. In concluding the despatch our ambassador said it seemed to him from the language held by the French ambassador, that, even if Britain declined to join them, France and Russia were determined to make a strong stand.[1]

None of this was communicated to the House when the Foreign Secretary made his statement on the 27th. What on earth then was the good of saying our interests in Servia were nil, when the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs had decided on July 24th, "that the general European question was involved, the Servian question being but a part of the former"? Russia began to mobilize on July 25th, according to the Czar's own telegram to the Kaiser. In Vienna, the Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs told the Russian representative that the Dual Monarchy felt that its very existence was at stake,

[1] This sentence, and the one in the despatch referring to the return of the French President and the President of the Council from Russia to France, are suppressed from the French Yellow Book.

and that the step taken (the strong note to Servia with a short time-limit) had caused great satisfaction throughout the country. That meant the Dual Monarchy, Austria-Hungary, must be preserved from internal disorder at all costs. Germany said it was a matter which concerned Austria and Servia exclusively, and that other Powers should keep out of it, owing to different treaty obligations. Sir Edward Grey in the toils is one of the most pathetic pictures in history; European entanglements were then weaving the net for his destruction. The *retiarii* of the Continental system were not so nice about the rules of the arena as our Foreign Secretary. How powerless he was to avert the strife is shown in his own despatch of the 24th to our ambassador at Paris, No. 10:

"M. Cambon said that, if there was a chance of mediation by the four Powers, he had no doubt that his Government would be glad to join in it; but he pointed out that we could not say anything in St. Petersburg till Russia had expressed some opinion or taken some action. . . . I said that I had not contemplated anything being said in St. Petersburg until after it was clear that there must be trouble between Austria and Russia."

But the French ambassador told him that it would be too late after Austria had once moved against Servia. The first communication Sir Edward sent to Russia was on July 25th, when he instructed our ambassador that Austria had explained that the note to Servia was not an ultimatum, but a step with a time-limit. Russia did not however accept that view. She was willing enough to leave the question in the hands of the four Powers, if Servia would appeal to them to arbitrate. In the despatch from our

ambassador at Petersburg, July 25th, No. 17, we learn:

"On my expressing the earnest hope that Russia would not precipitate war by mobilizing until you (Sir Edward Grey) had had time to use your influence in favour of peace, his Excellency (Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs) assured me that Russia had no aggressive intentions, and she would take no action until it was forced on her. Austria's action was in reality directed against Russia. She aimed at overthrowing the present *status quo* in the Balkans, and establishing her own hegemony there. He did not believe that Germany really wanted war, but her attitude was decided by ours. If we took our stand firmly with France and Russia there would be no war. If we failed them now, rivers of blood would flow, and we would in the end be dragged into the war. I said that England would play the rôle of mediator at Berlin and Vienna to better purpose as friend who, if her counsels of moderation were disregarded, might one day be converted into an ally, than if she were to declare herself Russia's ally at once. His Excellency said that unfortunately Germany was convinced that she could count on our neutrality. I said all I could to impress prudence on the Minister for Foreign Affairs, and warned him that if Russia mobilized, Germany would not be content with mere mobilization, or give Russia time to carry out hers, but would probably declare war at once."

The day before that conversation took place the British House of Commons had been discussing a Housing Bill. The House was up the next day, and who of its great body of private members had the faintest conception of what was taking place in diplomatic circles? Well might Juvenal ask who shall guard the guardians themselves.

From Berlin our ambassador telegraphed to Sir Edward Grey that the German Minister for Foreign

Affairs said that he had given the Russian Government to understand that the last thing Germany wanted was a general war, and that he would do all in his power to prevent such a calamity. If the relations between Austria and Russia became threatening he was quite ready to fall in with Sir Edward's suggestion as to the four Powers working in favour of moderation at Vienna and Petersburg. The Servian reply did not satisfy Austria, and her Minister left Belgrade on the 25th. Sir Edward then telegraphed to Petersburg that in his opinion the only chance of peace was for the four Powers to join in asking the Austrian and Russian Governments not to cross the frontier, and to give time for the four Powers acting at Vienna and Petersburg to try and arrange matters. Desperate efforts were made by Sir Edward Grey on the 25th, and 26th, to bring about the conference, but without success. The British ambassador at Vienna telegraphed on the 27th, that "the country had gone wild with joy at the prospect of war with Servia, and its postponement or prevention would undoubtedly be a great disappointment. It seemed to him that the Austrian note was so drawn up as to make war inevitable." France was willing to join the conference, but until it was known that the Germans had spoken at Vienna with some success, she thought it would be dangerous for the French, Russian, and British ambassadors to do so.

That is a fair summary of what had taken place when Sir Edward Grey made his statement to the House on Monday, July 27th. Now, Germany would have nothing to do with the suggestion of the four Powers acting together, for it had the appear-

ance of a court of arbitration; and she preferred an exchange of views between the Austrian and Russian Governments. In despatch No. 43, our ambassador at Berlin recorded a conversation he had on July 27th, with the German Minister for Foreign Affairs:

"Secretary of State said that as yet Austria was only partially mobilizing, but that if Russia mobilized against Germany latter would have to follow suit. I asked him what he meant by 'mobilizing against Germany.' He said that if Russia only mobilized in the south, Germany would not mobilize, but if she mobilized in north, Germany would have to do so too, and Russian system of mobilization was so complicated that it might be difficult exactly to locate her mobilization. Germany would therefore have to be very careful not to be taken by surprise."

But Germany was taken by surprise; for although Russia might not have begun mobilizing on the north, she had been mobilizing on the south for two days, and her complicated system of mobilization was complicated further by a rumour which was sent out that she feared an insurrection in Russian Poland. The British ambassador at Petersburg urged the Russian Government on the 27th, to defer the mobilization ukase for as long as possible, and that troops might not be allowed to cross the frontier even when it was issued. To this the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs replied that, until the issue of the Imperial ukase, no effective steps towards mobilization could be taken; and the Austrian Government would profit by delay, in order to complete her military preparations, if it were deferred too long. Yet the Czar in his telegram to the Kaiser said on July 30th, "The military measures now com-

ing into operation were decided upon five days ago for reasons of defence against Austria's preparations"!

Later in the day on the 27th, our ambassador at Petersburg sent word that Russia rejected Sir Edward Grey's proposal of a conference of the four Powers. Direct conversation between Vienna and Petersburg was to be Russia's way of dealing with the question.

In reading the British White Paper, one should bear in mind that it was not in the hands of members of Parliament until August 6th; and that, shortly after the war began, the great mass of the British people learned through our press that everything German was "Potsdam nonsense" and chicanery; that the German ambassador at London was worse than a fool; that the German Chancellor planned the whole calamity; and that nothing in our diplomatic relations with Germany should be accepted from German sources as containing a scintilla of truth. Editors and journalists of German extraction have done not a little in educating British opinion up to that standard of patriotism which rejoices in the notion that all opponents are liars. Notwithstanding, Sir Edward Grey had to deal with the German Foreign Office, and extend the courtesies of diplomacy to the German ambassador up to the time he left London. On July 27th, Sir Edward sent a despatch to our ambassador at Berlin saying:

"German ambassador has informed me that German Government accept in principle mediation between Austria and Russia by the four Powers, reserving, of course, their right as an ally to help Austria if attacked. He has also been instructed to request me to use influence in St. Peters-

burg to localize the war and to keep up the peace of Europe."

Whether the information tendered by the German ambassador was to be accepted as an honest endeavour on Germany's part to assist in keeping peace or not, it was too late to bring the conference to work effectually; for Russia had that day decided that direct conversation between Vienna and Petersburg should be the method of finding a solution. But the pressure of France and Russia was too much for the British Foreign Secretary. What our ambassador at Petersburg told him on the 24th, was the chief consideration,— namely, British solidarity with Russia and France,— was begun by him on the 27th, the day he told the House of Commons that it was necessary in the interests of peace to suspend all military operations pending the result of the conference. The very day he urged the German ambassador to press for moderation on Austria's part, he sent the following despatch to our ambassador at Petersburg:

"I have been told by the Russian ambassador that in German and Austrian circles impression prevails that in any event we (Britain) would stand aside. His Excellency deplored the effect that such an impression must produce. This impression ought, as I have pointed out, to be dispelled by the orders we have given to the First Fleet, which is concentrated, as it happens, at Portland, not to disperse for manœuvre leave. But I explained to the Russian ambassador that my reference to it must not be taken to mean that anything more than diplomatic action was promised."

Orders were issued to the Fleet on the 25th. The third Fleet was mobilized on the 13th. Several pa-

pers, with well-informed naval correspondents, have told us " Mr. Churchill was almost the only Minister who appreciated the gravity of the situation, and is understood to have given early orders ' on his own ' for the mobilization of the entire British Fleet," and " a fortnight before the Servian coup. . . . Italy was told there was going to be a storm . . . the English ambassador got the tip. Hence the assembly of the whole Fleet for inspection by the King. Mr. Churchill's extraordinary courage, decision, and foresight were never excelled by his great ancestor. England, thanks to Mr. Churchill, begins the war at her selected moment, not at the chosen moment of the Mad Dog of Europe." These, and many statements of the same kind, were made at the outbreak of hostilities. No one will wish to take one bit of credit from Mr. Churchill for his courage, foresight and administrative skill, but here we are dealing with diplomacy, and Mr. Churchill was First Lord of the Admiralty, not Foreign Secretary. Therefore, when Sir Edward Grey sent despatch No. 47 to Petersburg, the Admiralty intended France and Russia to understand that the British Fleet was all for the solidarity of the Entente Powers, no matter what the Foreign Secretary said. But the House of Commons as a whole knew nothing about it at all, save that " British interests in Servia were nil," and that the European situation was exceedingly grave.

On the day the hint was given in a despatch to Russia that the Fleet was ready, Russia took a firmer attitude towards Austria. M. Sazonof said, " It seems to me that England is in a better position than any other Power to make another attempt at Berlin

to induce the German Government to take the necessary action. There is no doubt that the key of the situation is to be found at Berlin." Our ambassador at Petersburg spoke to M. Sazonof on the 27th, and learned from him that he required Austria to guarantee the integrity of Servia and respect her rights as a sovereign State. The position seemed not hopeless, however, for our ambassador at Vienna in despatch No. 56, told Sir Edward Grey that the Russian ambassador at Vienna had just returned from Petersburg, and knew the views of the Russian Government and the state of Russian public opinion:

"He (Russian ambassador at Vienna) had just heard of a satisfactory conversation which the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs had yesterday with the Austrian ambassador at Petersburg. The former agreed that much of the Austro-Hungarian note to Servia had been perfectly reasonable; and in fact they had practically reached an understanding as to the guarantees which Servia might reasonably be asked to give to Austria-Hungary for her future good behaviour."

So the game of diplomatic chess was carried on for at least a week. Despatching to this capital and that capital, interviewing this Excellency and that Minister, recording the gossip of one chancellery and another, while the military and naval men behind all the mask of diplomacy were preparing for the conflict which those "in the know" were for the most part eager to begin. On July 28th, the Prime Minister told the House, "There are no new developments sufficiently definite to enable any further statement to be made, but we hope that no unfavourable inference will be drawn from this. I cannot say more." He said he had no definite informa-

tion that hostilities had broken out, yet in despatch 56, our ambassador at Vienna was informed by the Austrian Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, that "a skirmish had already taken place on the Danube, in which the Servians had been the aggressors." The moving of the British Fleet stiffened the attitude of Russia, and action on the part of Servia was at no time undertaken without the advice of Russia, if we are to believe a tenth of all the rumours which came surging from the east during the first weeks of the war.[1]

The sincerity of Germany was questioned in despatch No. 60, when the German Secretary of State refused to join the conference of the four Powers, and at the same time said he desired to work with Britain for the maintenance of general peace. Where was the British Fleet on July 28th? Did the action of the Admiralty inspire the German Foreign Office with confidence in working with us to maintain the general peace? What other fleet was there in the North Sea that so urgently required the attention of our Admiralty on July 27th? Anyway, whether Germany tried to influence Austria along the lines of moderation or not, our ambassador at Vienna telegraphed on the 28th, that "the Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs declared that Austria-Hungary could not delay warlike proceedings against Servia, and would have to decline any suggestion of negotiations on the basis of Servian reply. Prestige of Dual Monarchy was engaged, and nothing could now prevent conflict."

[1] "The future of Servia is secure now that it is the object of Your Majesty's gracious solicitude," so Prince Alexander of Servia telegraphed to the Czar.

What had happened to force Austria to drop the conversations with Russia that were progressing in Petersburg two or three days earlier? Two matters of vital importance: one was the consideration of Entente solidarity, which was, indeed, of far greater consequence to Russia than mere diplomatic armed support; and, the second was the skirmish on the Danube, where Servia had been the aggressor. War was declared by Austria on Servia that day. Then Sir Edward Grey dropped his proposal of a conference like a hot brick, and sent word to the British ambassador at Berlin that " as long as there is a prospect of a direct exchange of views between Austria and Russia, I would suspend every other suggestion, as I entirely agree that it is the most preferable method of all." The German Government then accepted the principle of mediation between Austria and Russia by the four Powers; but again it was too late, for Russia decided to issue the Imperial ukase for mobilization on the 29th without " any aggressive intention against Germany." That, so the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs informed the Russian ambassador at London, put an end to the idea of direct communications between Austria and Russia. Then the British Cabinet was urgently desired to influence Austria to suspend military operations against Servia.

It is amazing how the chancelleries labour with child-like deceptiveness to cover up the work of their armed support. Russia began military preparations on the 25th, according to the Czar, but the mobilization ukase was not issued until the 29th; yet on the 28th, M. Sazonof wanted Austria to suspend her military operations after Servia had begun hostili-

ties on the 27th. The way the world has been duped by the preposterous terminology of the chancelleries is one of the wonders of the age. Why, on the 28th, it was known at the Berlin Foreign Office that Russia had mobilized fourteen army corps in the south; the German Imperial Chancellor told our ambassador that much when the latter telegraphed to Sir Edward Grey that his Austrian colleague said "that a general war was most unlikely, as Russia neither wanted nor was in a position to make war!" If the people of Europe will only apply some sense and understanding to a study of the British White Paper they will find evidence enough in it to condemn every diplomatist concerned.

A great feature of the system of education entered on by our press in the early stages of the war, was the German refusal to join Sir Edward Grey's conference. That was a great black mark against Germany. Learn from despatch No. 72 what our ambassador at St. Petersburg said on the 28th: "As regards the suggestion of conference, the ambassador (German) had received no instructions, and before acting with me, the French and Italian ambassadors are still waiting for their final instructions." Then after Russia issued the mobilization ukase, and Austria had declared war on Servia, our ambassador at Vienna sent the following despatch, No. 74:

"I am informed by the Russian ambassador that the Russian Government's suggestion has been declined by the Austro-Hungarian Government. . The suggestion was to the effect that the means of settling the Austro-Servian conflict should be discussed directly between the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Austrian ambassador at St.

Petersburg, who should be authorized accordingly. The Russian ambassador thinks that a conference in London of the less interested Powers, such as you have proposed, offers now the only prospect of preserving peace of Europe, and he is sure that the Russian Government will acquiesce willingly in your proposal. So long as opposing armies have not actually come in contact, all hope need not be abandoned."

Yet two days earlier the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Austrian Ambassador at Petersburg had practically reached an understanding!

Can any one believe in the face of all the shuffling, wobbling threats and restraints, that either Austria or Russia desired peace wholeheartedly? Something,— only lightly hinted at in the White Paper,— was thrusting both Governments on. Peace to both meant very grave internal disorder; war carried the chance of consolidating their various peoples. Small wonder a distinguished personage was heard to gasp on August 1st, "Oh, for ten minutes of splendid isolation!"

From Berlin news came on the 29th, that there was depression at the German Foreign Office. The Secretary of State was "much troubled by reports of mobilization in Russia, and of certain military measures, which he did not specify, being taken in France. He subsequently spoke of these measures to my French colleague, who informed him that French Government had done nothing more than the German Government had done, namely, recalled officers on leave. His Excellency denied German Government had done this, but as a matter of fact it is true." Far more than that was true; the British Fleet was then a long, long way from Tipperary.

Anyway, Russian officers left Switzerland as early as July 15th.

It was on July 28th that the royalties began to take a hand at telegraphing. The Kaiser sent a message to his devoted friend and cousin Nicholas, saying, " Remembering the hearty friendship which for long had bound us two securely together, I am throwing the whole of my influence into the scale to induce Austria-Hungary to seek for an open and satisfactory understanding with Russia. I confidently hope for your assistance in my endeavours to put aside all the difficulties that may arise."

The Czar replied on the 29th,—" To obviate such a misfortune as a European war, I implore you, in the name of our old friendship, to do all in your power to restrain your ally from going too far." Though the Kaiser and Czar could not, of course, agree with each other as to the respective merits of Austria and Russia in the quarrel, the Kaiser agreed to act as mediator, " which I have readily assumed in response to your appeal to my friendship and help." Then, if we are to believe ambassadors, the German Government set to work in earnest to influence Austria; to use the phrase of Sir Edward Grey, Germany began to " press the button " in the interests of peace. Few in Britain believe that, since the Jingo press have told us all the diplomatists forgot to put in their despatches. The fourth and fifth telegrams of the German and Russian monarchs are of sufficient interest to give in full:

" July 30th, 1 A.M.

" My ambassador is instructed to draw the attention of your Government to the dangers and serious consequences of a mobilization. I said the same to you in my last tele-

gram. Austria-Hungary has only mobilized against Servia, and only a part of its army. If, as appears from your communication and that of your Government, Russia is mobilizing against Austria-Hungary, the rôle of mediator which you intrusted to me in friendly wise, and which I accepted at your express request, is jeopardized, if not rendered impossible. The whole burden of decision now rests upon your shoulders, the responsibility for war or peace.

"WILLIAM."

He might not have meant a word of it; it might have been all bluff, and the Emperor of Russia might have known the true character of the Kaiser almost as well as editors of Jingo papers; nevertheless, the telegram contained downright good sense. The Czar's reply was as follows:

"PETERHOF, July 30th, 1914. 1.20 P.M.

"From my heart I thank you for your speedy reply. I am this evening sending Tatisheff with instructions. The military measures now coming into operation were decided upon five days ago for reasons of defence against Austria's preparations. Most heartily do I trust that these measures will in no way influence your position as mediator, which I value highly. We need your strong pressure on Austria to secure an understanding with us.

"NICHOLAS."

"All would depend on Russia," Count Mensdorff said to Sir Edward Grey, on July 23rd. So the Kaiser must have thought after he received the telegram from his devoted friend and cousin, Nicholas. "Go on mediating, and use your strong pressure on Austria, while we make all our preparations to bring a stronger kind of pressure to bear on her later." The Petersburg correspondent of the *Times,* as early as the 26th, said that the army manœuvres had been

countermanded in view of the impending mobilization, and "military opinion, although ardently desiring war, is constrained to admit that Austria-Hungary is unaccountably dilatory if she really intends war, inasmuch as it is obviously her interest to rush Servia in order to be ready for an attack from the north." At that time the war party in Russia were having things their own way. But the telegrams cannot be thoroughly appreciated without the following from the Petersburg correspondent of the *Times*.

"St. Petersburg, July 27th.

"The Czar left to-night on his trip to the Finnish Skerries. Now that matters appear to have become calmer it may not be amiss to quote a sentence used by the Czar at the close of the Grand Council on Saturday (25th): 'We have stood this sort of thing,' he said, 'for seven and a half years. This is enough.' Thereupon his Majesty authorized the issue of orders for a partial mobilization confined to the 14 Army Corps on the Austrian frontier. At the same time an intimation was given to Germany that orders for the mobilization of the remainder of the Russian Army would follow immediately upon mobilization by Germany."

On July 29th, Reuter's Petersburg correspondent telegraphed, "Confident of England's support, about which doubts have mostly disappeared, the Russian public is prepared to accept war." Up to one o'clock of the morning of July 30th, the court world and diplomatic world (save Austria) seemed to be shouting to the Kaiser to "press the button" in the interests of peace, while all the fleets and armies of his opponents were busily preparing for war.

But what about the freest assembly in the world,

the British House of Commons? What did it know about the business? Did it know as much as the Russian public? The Prime Minister was questioned and said, "As the House is aware, a formal Declaration of War was issued yesterday by Austria against Servia. The situation at this moment is one of extreme gravity. I can only say, usefully say, that His Majesty's Government are not relaxing their efforts to do everything in their power to circumscribe the area of possible conflict." Then the House got to work on an Aliens Bill and Scottish Agriculture, and at intervals sought the ticker for stray scraps of information from the chancelleries. Any clerk in a foreign office might know what the consequences meant to Europe; any pressman "in the know" might get first hand information in Russia, or Austria, or Germany; but private members of the Freest Assembly in the World were told — what they had already seen in the public prints. But why should any private member on the Government side of the House worry for a single moment? They all knew Britain was not under any obligation to go to war to support any Power. British interests in Servia were nil. Our hands were quite free. We had no entangling alliances: Both the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary had time and again told the House so much. Indeed one might have wondered why the Prime Minister should refer to the situation being one of extreme gravity. Such in the universal sense it might very well be; but, in a national sense, we were out of the area of hostilities.

That was the position on July 29th, and the House

rose at twelve minutes after three on Thursday morning after discussing the Inebriates Bill, with the prospect of a debate on the Milk and Dairies Bill after questions that afternoon.

CHAPTER XII

A GAME OF CHESS

"In England men will learn with amazement and incredulity that war is possible over the question of a Servian port, or even over the larger issues which are said to lie behind it. Yet that is whither the nations are blindly drifting. Who, then, makes war? The answer is to be found in the Chancelleries of Europe, among the men who have too long played with human lives as pawns in a game of chess, who have become so enmeshed in formulas and the jargon of diplomacy that they have ceased to be conscious of the poignant realities with which they trifle. And thus will war continue to be made, until the great masses who are the sport of professional schemers and dreamers say the word which will bring, not eternal peace, for that is impossible, but a determination that wars shall be fought only in a just and righteous and vital cause."

— The *Times,* November 26th, 1912.

When the House of Commons met on Thursday, July 30th, Mr. Bonar Law asked the Foreign Secretary for information. "There is very little that I can say," Sir Edward Grey replied. "I regret I cannot say that the situation is less grave than it was yesterday. The outstanding facts are the same. Austria has begun war against Servia, and Russia has ordered a partial mobilization, which has not hitherto led to any corresponding steps by other Powers, so far as our information goes. We continue to pursue the one great object, to preserve European

peace, and for this purpose are keeping in close touch with other Powers. In thus keeping in touch, we have, I am glad to say, had no difficulties so far, though it has not been possible for the Powers to unite in joint diplomatic action as was proposed on Monday." British interests in Servia were nil, but the Admiralty had armed forty merchantmen all the same; the arsenals, factories, and depots were working at high pressure; and yet the Foreign Secretary could not understand why Germany on the 29th, was dilatory in joining the four Powers to use mediating influence. That was what he telegraphed to the British ambassador at Berlin on July 29th, notwithstanding the fact that he had the day before given up the notion of a conference, and adopted the idea of direct conversations between Austria and Russia, according to his despatch to the same embassy. Early on the 29th, he heard from the British ambassador at Berlin that Germany was giving advice to Austria. Then the Austrian Government declined definitely direct conversation with Petersburg. Why? Russia would not stop making all military preparations; she had been at work since the 25th, and had left no stone unturned to perfect her mobilization, which was five days ahead of the issue of the ukase.

Now when the Foreign Secretary told the House on July 30th, that there was very little he could say, he was in possession of the information contained in despatch No. 85; the document which records the "infamous proposal," so described by Mr. Asquith in the House eight days after it was received at the Foreign Office. It would be better to glance at the whole of it than to tear sentences from their context:

No. 85.

SIR E. GOSCHEN TO SIR EDWARD GREY.

(Received July 29th.)

"BERLIN, July 29th, 1914.

"I was asked to call upon the Chancellor to-night. His Excellency had just returned from Potsdam.

"He said that should Austria be attacked by Russia a European conflagration might, he feared, become inevitable, owing to Germany's obligations as Austria's ally, in spite of his continued efforts to maintain peace. He then proceeded to make the following strong bid for British neutrality. He said that it was clear, so far as he was able to judge the main principle which governed British policy, that Great Britain would never stand by and allow France to be crushed in any conflict there might be. That, however, was not the object at which Germany aimed. Provided that neutrality of Great Britain were certain, every assurance would be given to the British Government that the Imperial Government aimed at no territorial acquisitions at the expense of France should they prove victorious in any war that might ensue.

"I questioned his Excellency about the French colonies, and he said that he was unable to give a similar undertaking in that respect. As regards Holland, however, his Excellency said that, so long as Germany's adversaries respected the integrity and neutrality of the Netherlands, Germany was ready to give His Majesty's Government an assurance that she would do likewise. It depended upon the action of France what operations Germany might be forced to enter upon in Belgium, but when the war was over, Belgian integrity would be respected if she had not sided against Germany.

"His Excellency ended by saying that ever since he had been Chancellor the object of his policy had been, as you were aware, to bring about an understanding with England; he trusted that these assurances might form a basis of that understanding which he so much desired. He had in mind

a general neutrality agreement between England and Germany, though it was of course at the present moment too early to discuss details, and an assurance of British neutrality in the conflict which present crisis might possibly produce, would enable him to look forward to realization of his desire.

"In reply to his Excellency's enquiry how I thought his request would appeal to you, I said that I did not think it probable that at this stage of events you would care to bind yourself to any course of action and that I was of opinion that you would desire to retain full liberty.

"Our conversation upon this subject having come to an end, I communicated the contents of your telegram of to-day to his Excellency, who expressed his best thanks to you."

And this we are told to accept as coming from a man whose Government had planned the whole of the terrible business which startled the world at the beginning of August. Why, panic is large in every paragraph of it; and that is not surprising. The German Chancellor had just returned from Potsdam where no doubt he learned that M. Sazonof was saying one thing about Russian mobilization to the German ambassador, while the army was acting in quite a contrary manner. We in Britain were busy enough on the 29th, and we had a deal less reason, on the surface, to prepare for "all emergencies" than Russia. The telegram from the Kaiser to the Czar which was sent at midnight on the 29th, is indicative of the alarming reports received at Berlin. The Kaiser said, "If, as appears from your communication and that of your Government, Russia is mobilizing against Austria-Hungary, the rôle of mediator which you entrusted to me . . . is jeopardized. . . . The whole burden of decision now rests upon your shoulders."

News had reached Berlin that Belgium had issued as early as July 24th, a mobilization circular, and an undated instruction to Belgian ambassadors which contained the information they were to give to the chancelleries as to her "strengthened peace footing." Small wonder the British ambassador at Brussels "seemed somewhat surprised at the speed with which we (Belgium) had decided to mobilize our army," according to the despatch of the Belgian Minister for Foreign Affairs. Potsdam must have realized on the 29th that all the Powers of the Entente were well ahead of the game, while Germany was "pressing the button" at Vienna. The Russian ambassador telegraphed to Petersburg that "the German ambassador has asked Grey why Great Britain was taking military measures on land and sea. Grey replied that these measures had no aggressive character, but that the situation was such that each Power must be ready." The jargon of diplomacy! No Power had the slightest wish to be aggressive. Not at all. Millions of men were being set in motion and millions of money spent, because British interests in Servia were nil; because every Power was earnestly seeking peace. Will a credulous public go on forever believing that Belgium was acting quite alone, entirely on her own behalf, when her Foreign Minister sent out his circular on July 24th, to the five Powers signatory of the Treaty of 1839, "in the event of a war breaking out on her frontiers"? Do people realize that the Belgian despatch was sent out on the same day Austria handed to Servia the famous note, which began all the trouble? Will our European diplomatists, "men who have too long played with human lives as

pawns in a game of chess," to use the phrase of the *Times*, tell us that the first despatch in the Belgian official report, from M. Davignon, was the work of an exceedingly gifted prophet? This is what the Belgian despatch says:

> "In these circumstances I have proposed to the King and to my colleagues in the Cabinet, who have concurred, to give you now exact instructions as to the steps to be taken by you if the prospect of a Franco-German War became more threatening."

This from the Belgian Foreign Minister the day before Servia replied to the Austrian note; and two days before Sir Edward Grey proposed the Conference of the four Powers. It seems incredible. The Belgian Government on July 24th anticipated a Franco-German war; and began to make preparations for it on the very day Russia started to mobilize, and two days before the first public order to the British Fleet was issued.

If we are to believe all that has been said of the highly efficient spy system of the German Government, it needs no stretch of the imagination to suspect that by July 29th the German Chancellor knew pretty well how things were with all the Governments of the Entente Powers. Therefore, to understand the inwardness of the "infamous proposal" in despatch No. 85, it is absolutely necessary to be in possession of at least the facts set down above. Besides, the Russian official report tells us that the Russian ambassador at London had heard from Sir Edward Grey on July 27th; that he had told the German ambassador that

"if Austria were to begin hostilities in spite of the Servian reply she would prove her intention of crushing Servia. Looked at in this light, the question might give rise to a situation which might lead to a war in which all the Powers would be involved." The wording of despatch No. 85 leads one to imagine that the question of Belgian neutrality was mentioned for the first time by the German Chancellor. There is no evidence that the British ambassador was instructed by the Foreign Secretary to question the German Chancellor about his intentions towards Belgium. It must have been known at our Foreign Office that Germany in April, 1914, had declared she would respect the Treaty of 1839. It was, however, France, not Belgium, that was troubling the German Chancellor after his return from Potsdam on July 29th. The German Secretary of State had told the British ambassador earlier in the day that "he was much troubled by reports of mobilization in Russia, and of certain military measures, which he did not specify, being taken in France." The German Chancellor must have known what Russian mobilization really meant, and how that affected France and Belgium. Anyway, the terms of the Franco-Russian Alliance were not hidden from him; and as early as the 20th, he must have guessed what was in the mind of Franco-Russian circles in Petersburg when according to Reuter's correspondent at the state banquet the toasts implied the support of England. The German Chancellor might be as wicked a diplomatist as there is in Europe to-day; he might have known the terms of the Austrian note; he might be the most colossal liar to be found at any

embassy; but he was not quite so great a fool as those who believe that the whole story of this affair is contained in the British White Paper.

Is it to be imagined that the German military authorities did not know as much as Mr. Amery did when he spoke in the debate in the House of Commons on July 4th, 1912? Blinking whenever a fact against our diplomacy has to be faced, will not help the people of Britain or Europe to root out the awful cancer which lies at the base of all the evil system of diplomacy. By shutting one's eyes to facts some men may do loyal service to a party, or a Government; but the time is come when a higher standard of political life is called for. Therefore, in getting at the inwardness of the "infamous proposal," we must regard it as the desire of a desperate diplomatist, hemmed in,— hoist, if you like, by his own petard — to know the worst his Government had to cope with. The time had come for him to test the British diplomatic position.

Sir Edward Grey was in possession of all these facts when he spoke to the House on July 30th. The next day the Prime Minister made a statement after business:

"We have just heard — not from St. Petersburg, but from Germany — that Russia has proclaimed a general mobilization of her Army and Fleet, and that in consequence of this, martial law was to be proclaimed for Germany. We understand this to mean that mobilization will follow in Germany if the Russian mobilization is general and is proceeded with. In the circumstances, I should prefer not to answer any questions till Monday next."

Up went the signboard "Not in the public interest"; and the representatives of the free and en-

lightened electors were dismissed for three days' recreation. Representative government! Presumably the war party in the House would have carried the day had the Prime Minister given the Commons the information then in possession of the Foreign Office; but what the country on July 30th would have said if that day the whole truth had been told of the agreement of 1906, when conversations began between French and British military and naval experts, is another matter. The week-end made all the difference in public feeling, and indeed in the feeling of Ministers themselves. The *casus belli* had not been determined on July 30th. Suppose the Prime Minister had told the House on the 30th that the Foreign Secretary had been informed by M. Cambon, the French ambassador, the day before, that, "He anticipated a demand from Germany that France would be neutral while Germany attacked Russia. This assurance, France, of course, could not give: she was bound to help Russia if Russia was attacked." Of course. The jargon of diplomacy translated into plain English meant, France through her agreement with Russia must fight when trouble arose between Germany and Russia, therefore Belgium must be prepared, for her territory would become the battleground of the operations in the west; and Britain, because of her secret understanding with France and Belgium, must hasten to their assistance. We were, for good or for evil, engaged in a Continental system. Sir Edward Grey had warned the German ambassador on the 29th, that he did not wish him to be misled by the friendly tone of our conversation into thinking that we should stand aside. Then the German ambassador, accord-

ing to the Foreign Secretary's despatch to Berlin, No. 90, said emphatically, that some means must be found of preserving the peace of Europe. Rapidly the scene was changing from the Danube and the Neva to the Meuse and the North Sea. Still the actors in the drama talked as if the action of the play lay in the east. They were obliged to do so, for any indication to the audience that the unities were disregarded, would have led to the danger of springing the whole plot on the audience too soon.

Germany was in a desperate fix at midnight on the 29th. At once she began bringing pressure on Austria. She has, however, received no thanks for her trouble. Indeed, it has been said that she never tried to influence Austria. Strange it is how war seems to close the gates of simple justice on mankind. Why even the British ambassador at Vienna in his despatch, No. 95, said:

"The French ambassador hears from Berlin that the German ambassador at Vienna is instructed to speak seriously to the Austro-Hungarian Government against acting in a manner calculated to provoke a European war. Unfortunately the German ambassador is himself so identified with extreme anti-Russian and anti-Servian feeling prevalent in Vienna that he is unlikely to plead the cause of peace with entire sincerity."

We now have proof of this. And it may be pointed out how a people may easily be at the mercy of the antipathies of their own ambassador. On July 29th, the German ambassador at Petersburg telegraphed to Berlin that the Vienna Cabinet had sent a negative reply to the wish expressed by the Russian Government to enter into direct negotiations.

Thereupon the German Chancellor sent the following message to Vienna:

"BERLIN, July 30th, 1914.

"The report of Count Pourtales does not harmonize with the account which your Excellency has given of the attitude of the Austro-Hungarian Government. Apparently there is a misunderstanding which I beg you to clear up. We cannot expect Austria-Hungary to negotiate with Servia, with which she is in a state of war. The refusal, however, to exchange views with St. Petersburg would be a grave mistake. We are indeed ready to fulfil our duty. As an ally we must, however, refuse to be drawn into a world conflagration through Austria-Hungary not respecting our advice. Your Excellency will express this to Count Berchtold with all emphasis, and great seriousness.

"BETHMANN-HOLLWEG."

When the contents of this despatch were made known the Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs told the German ambassador there had indeed been a misunderstanding, but that it had been explained and the Austrian ambassador at Petersburg had already received instructions to begin negotiations with M. Sazonof. But notwithstanding diplomatic misunderstandings, M. Sazonof would not and could not stop mobilizing. He was ready to meet Austria, make and re-make formulas, but all these expedients carried no conviction at Vienna or Berlin so long as Russian mobilization was continued. Poor M. Sazonof! he was not in the position of our Foreign Secretary, who was regarded by Lord Haldane as the "Commander of the Forces." All would depend on Russia and all did depend on Russia. The German Secretary of State told our ambassador at Berlin to impress on Sir Edward Grey the difficulty

of Germany's position in view of Russian mobilization and the military measures which he heard were being taken in France. Only officers on leave had been recalled; nothing special done in the way of military preparations. But, "something would have soon to be done for it might be too late, and when they mobilized they would have to mobilize on three sides. He regretted this, as he knew France did not desire war, but it would be a military necessity." Perhaps the Secretary of State thought it was time to take his finger off the button and place it on the trigger. At the same time, he told the British ambassador that the warning Sir Edward Grey had given the German ambassador at London, as to Britain's neutrality, had not reached the German Chancellor until after the "infamous proposal" was made.

"His Excellency added that telegram received from Prince Lichnowsky last night contains matter which he had heard with regret, but not exactly with surprise, and at all events he thoroughly appreciated the frankness and loyalty with which you had spoken. He also told me that this telegram had only reached Berlin very late last night; had it been received earlier Chancellor would, of course, not have spoken to me in the way he had done."

Why our Foreign Secretary should telegraph on the 29th to our ambassador at Paris that he "was about to warn Prince Lichnowsky" that Germany must not count on Britain standing aside, before he telegraphed the same grave information to our ambassador at Berlin, is a mystery.

It is worth while looking a little closer at this phase of diplomatic negotiations because it touches

the second point in the White Paper which has raised so much uneasiness in the minds of some of the most intelligent men in Britain. Most fair-minded people now admit that there would have been no war if the British Government had boldly announced on receipt of Sir George Buchanan's despatch on July 24th that the Triple Entente would proclaim their solidarity. Now that the truth is leaking out and intelligent people have had time to reflect, this is found to be the first point in the White Paper that is the cause of widespread regret. The "warning" is the second point. Analyzed chronologically, it seems to be a thoroughly discreditable affair.

On the morning of Wednesday, July 29th, Sir Edward Grey told M. Paul Cambon (see despatch No. 87, British White Paper, to Sir Francis Bertie) that he meant to tell the German ambassador that day that he must not be misled from the friendly tone of their conversation that Britain would stand aside.

In the next despatch, No. 88, July 29th, from Sir Edward Grey to Sir E. Goschen, there is not one word about warning the German ambassador.

In despatch No. 89, Sir Edward Grey told Sir E. Goschen that he saw the German ambassador that afternoon, July 29th, and told him not to be misled by the friendly tone of their conversation into thinking that Britain would stand aside.

Despatch No. 90 proves Sir Edward Grey saw the German ambassador *twice* on July 29th.

It is evident that Sir Edward Grey did not warn the German ambassador when he saw him that morning. It is also evident that Sir Edward Grey notified M. Paul Cambon and the British ambassador at Paris that he was about to warn the German

ambassador that Britain would not stand aside, several hours before he gave the warning to Prince Lichnowsky.

There is no reference at all in M. Paul Cambon's despatch of July 29th, No. 98 in the French Yellow Book, to Sir Edward Grey's warning. Strangely enough, the French ambassador, after receiving the news from Sir Edward Grey of the warning to be given to the German ambassador, told the French Government:

"My German colleague having asked Sir Edward Grey what the intentions of the British Government were, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs replied that he had nothing to state for the present. Sir Edward Grey did not disguise the fact that he found the situation very grave and that he had little hope of a peaceful solution."

Why there should be no reference to the warning in despatch No. 98, in the French Yellow Book, (the only despatch sent by the French ambassador at London to his Government on July 29) is as difficult to understand as the statement attributed to Sir Edward Grey which is quoted above. The news of the warning was, however, known in Berlin on the afternoon of July 29th. In despatch No. 92 in the French Yellow Book, from M. Jules Cambon, the French ambassador at Berlin, we learn:

"The attitude of the Chancellor (German) is very probably the result of the last interview of Sir Edward Grey with Prince Lichnowsky. Up to quite the last days they flattered themselves here (Berlin) that England would remain out of the question, and the impression produced on the German Government and on the financiers and business men by her attitude is profound."

This is illuminating. Indeed it explains a great deal which seemed dark and difficult in the early days of August. It was then thought by a certain school of Jingo journalists that the threat or warning of Sir Edward Grey, on July 29th, was the influence which forced the German Chancellor to bring pressure to bear on Austria to obtain direct conversations with Russia. But the German Chancellor knew nothing about the threat or warning when he saw Sir Edward Goschen on the afternoon of July 29th. M. Jules Cambon was evidently misled when he sent his despatch, for the Berlin Foreign Office knew nothing then about "the result of the last interview of Sir Edward Grey with Prince Lichnowsky." Still, M. Cambon might have been in possession of the information which was to be given to Prince Lichnowsky, for it had been given to his brother in London that morning.

It is quite clear that neither Sir Edward Goschen nor the German Chancellor knew anything about the warning when they had their interview on the afternoon of July 29th. There is no evidence at all that Sir E. Goschen received despatch No. 89, in which Sir Edward Grey told him that he had warned the German ambassador. It was not telegraphed. If he had received it, he would have known what the German Secretary of State was referring to on July 30th when he was told that the telegram received from Prince Lichnowsky did not reach Berlin until very late on the night of July 29th. Sir Edward Goschen was so much in the dark about this matter that Sir Edward Grey had to telegraph on July 30th and tell him that he (Sir Edward Grey) had warned Prince Lichnowsky.

The whole of the basis Mr. Asquith took for his case on August 6th was despatch No. 85, British White Paper, from Sir Edward Goschen to Sir Edward Grey; this contained the "infamous proposal." No notice at all was ever taken of despatch No. 98 from Sir Edward Goschen to Sir Edward Grey. It was not "infamous" to let the French ambassador at London and the British ambassador at Paris know on July 29th that Sir Edward Grey was about to warn Prince Lichnowsky that Britain would not stand aside; it was not "infamous" to let the British ambassador at Berlin meet the German Chancellor on the afternoon of July 29th, ignorant that Prince Lichnowsky was about to be warned,— though the French ambassador at Berlin seemed at that time to be pretty fully acquainted with the news of the warning; it was not "infamous" that the British ambassador at Berlin should not know what the German Secretary of State was referring to on July 30th when he told Sir Edward Goschen:

"That telegram received from Prince Lichnowsky . . . had only reached Berlin very late last night; had it been received earlier Chancellor (German) would, of course, not have spoken to me in way he had done."

So the infamous proposal would not have been made had Sir Edward Grey dealt with the Berlin Foreign Office and the German ambassador at London with the ordinary courtesy that one business man extends to another. Yet it will be seen that Sir Edward Grey in despatch No. 101 to Sir Edward Goschen, July 30th, does not refer at all to despatch No. 98, though after he had sent No. 101 he had to telegraph to Sir Edward Goschen, in No. 102, that he had warned Prince Lichnowsky.

Is it any wonder that intelligent, fair-minded people now smile when the British White Paper is referred to, and shake their heads sorrowfully when the uninitiated talk about the "infamous proposal"? Why neither Sir Edward Grey nor Mr. Asquith has ever referred to despatch No. 98 is one of the first-class mysteries of this terrible business. But this mystery may help to teach Members of Parliament a lesson in diplomatic methods. In future they may wish to see papers giving a full statement of the case in good and ample time to scrutinize closely what diplomatists have been doing and saying. If, on Friday, July 31st, the House of Commons had been in possession of the British White Paper, and all the despatches up to midnight, July 30th, so that the members could have studied it closely over the week-end, there might have been a very different set of circumstances to record of the first week of August, even though we were entangled with France and Russia.

But Prince Lichnowsky was not the only person not warned in time in that dreadful last week of July. The members of the British House of Commons were not warned. During that week our allies seemed to have no doubt that the peace of Europe lay in the hands of Great Britain; and Russia and France constantly warned Sir Edward Grey of the fact. The Foreign Secretary knew that the President of France had told our ambassador at Paris on July 30th, that he was convinced that peace between the Powers was in the hands of Great Britain. He said:

"If His Majesty's Government announced that England would come to the aid of France in the event of a conflict

between France and Germany as a result of the present differences between Austria and Servia, there would be no war, for Germany would at once modify her attitude."

The Russian ambassador at Paris told the President of the French Council on the night of July 30th that war was imminent and that:

"She (Russia) counts on the help of France as an ally, and that she considers it desirable that England should join Russia and France without loss of time. France is resolved to fulfil all the obligations of her alliance."

From the beginning neither Russia nor France ceased trying to get the British Foreign Secretary to declare openly what Britain would do. Procrastination was the offspring of secrecy, and the "Commander of the Forces" was about as free to move as Laocoon.

A leader in the *Times* on July 30th, said:

"The instinct of self-preservation, which is the strongest factor in national life, therefore compels us — if the efforts of our Government to keep the peace should fail — to be ready to strike with all our force for our own safety and for that of our friends."

At last M. Cambon had to resort to some compulsion, as the supplications of neither Russia nor France were of complete avail; and he on the 30th wrote reminding Sir Edward Grey of the secret engagement entered into in January, 1906, and enclosed copies of the letters they had exchanged in November, 1912. It is only necessary now to look at the letter from M. Cambon:

"FRENCH EMBASSY, LONDON.
"November 23rd, 1912.

"Dear Sir Edward:

"You reminded me in your letter of yesterday, 22nd November, that during the last few years the military and naval authorities of France and Great Britain had consulted with each other from time to time; that it had always been understood that these consultations should not restrict the liberty of either Government to decide in the future whether they should lend each other the support of their armed forces; that, on either side, these consultations between experts were not and should not be considered as engagements binding our Governments to take action in certain eventualities; that, however, I had remarked to you that, if one or other of the two Governments had grave reasons to fear an unprovoked attack on the part of a third Power, it would become essential to know whether it could count on the armed support of the other.

"Your letter answers that point, and I am authorized to state that, in the event of one of our two Governments having grave reasons to fear either an attack from a third Power, or some event threatening the general peace, that Government would immediately examine with the other the question whether both Governments should act together in order to prevent aggression or preserve peace. If so, the two Governments would deliberate as to the measures which they would be prepared to take in common; if those measures involved action, the two Governments would take into immediate consideration the plans of their general staffs and would then decide as to the effect to be given to those plans.

"Yours, etc.,
"PAUL CAMBON."

With the letters the French ambassador enclosed a communication he had received from the French Minister for Foreign Affairs, which said that the

German patrols had twice penetrated French territory, "yesterday (Friday)," which was not correct, for the communication was dated July 31st, and the 31st was Friday. According to despatch No. 106 in the French Yellow Book German patrols penetrated French territory on Wednesday, July 29th, but not until August 2nd did M. Viviani think it worth while notifying Berlin of the violation of the French frontier by German troops. Then he informed the French ambassador in despatch No. 139 that "German troops having to-day violated the eastern frontier at several points, I request you immediately to protest in writing to the German Government." To the request of M. Cambon the Foreign Secretary replied that the Cabinet would meet in the morning (Friday) and that he would "see him again to-morrow afternoon." In Sir Edward Grey's despatch to the British ambassador at Paris, he states that M. Cambon had reminded him of the letters of November, 1912, and that the French ambassador had also given him a copy of the communication from the French Minister for Foreign Affairs. But as the communication is dated "Paris, July 31st, 1914," and the British despatch to Paris, No. 105, is dated July 30th, it is a little difficult to understand how M. Cambon and Sir Edward Grey could have been in possession of a document on the 30th, which did not leave Paris until the 31st. This communication is a specimen of how diplomatists make war. The dates are all wrong, so wrong indeed that the Foreign Office in issuing the second edition of the White Paper cut out the dates and day, Friday. Compare the communication (Enclosure 3 in No. 105, British White Paper) with No. 106 in

the French Yellow Book and judge to what extent the collaboration of M. Paul Cambon impressed the British Foreign Office. The phrase "As you see, Germany has done it," is not to be found in the despatch from M. Viviani. But more remarkable things than that happen in diplomatic circles; so, like many other curious slips in the despatching business, we may leave the dates for future Macaulays and Guizots to set straight.

Friday, July 31st, was perhaps the blackest Friday the world has ever known. Millionaires came from the city to their homes in the west end, trembling with anxiety, wondering what their financial position would be within a week. Prices of foodstuffs went up with a bound. All would depend on Russia! On Friday the whisper was "All will depend on Germany!" From Berlin came the following despatch:

No. 108.

SIR E. GOSCHEN TO SIR EDWARD GREY.

(Telegraphic.) (Received July 31st.)

"BERLIN, July 31st, 1914.

"Chancellor informs me that his efforts to preach peace and moderation at Vienna have been seriously handicapped by the Russian mobilization against Austria. He has done everything possible to attain his object at Vienna, perhaps even rather more than was altogether palatable at the Ballplatz. He could not, however, leave his country defenceless while time was being utilized by other Powers; and if, as he learns is the case, military measures are now being taken by Russia against Germany also, it would be impossible for him to remain quiet. He wished to tell me that it was quite possible that in a very short time, to-day perhaps, the German Government would take some very serious step; he was, in fact, just on the point of going to have an audience with the Emperor. His Excellency added that the

news of the active preparations on the Russo-German frontier had reached him just when the Czar had appealed to the Emperor, in the name of their old friendship, to mediate at Vienna, and when the Emperor was actually conforming to that request."

To the British ambassador at St. Petersburg, Sir Edward Grey telegraphed that he did not see how Russia could be urged to suspend military preparations unless some limit were put by Austria to the advance of her troops into Servia. Then to Berlin he sent a message saying Austria has declared her willingness to respect Servian sovereignty and the integrity of Servian territory; and that while Germany sounded Vienna, and Britain sounded Petersburg, all Powers would suspend further military operations or preparations. At the same time he warned the German ambassador that if France became involved, Britain would be drawn in. Soon, however, news was received in Berlin that the whole Russian army and fleet were being mobilized, and Germany then announced that she must certainly prepare for all emergencies. *Kriegsgefahr* was immediately proclaimed. The Foreign Secretary had failed utterly to influence Russia's military preparations.

Then his greater struggle with his Continental friends began. Both Russia and France pressed him again and again to declare that Britain would support them. In vain he strove to put France off by saying British treaties and obligations were not yet involved. The French ambassador "urged His Majesty's Government to reconsider this decision." From Paris came a message saying the German Government had sent an ultimatum to the

Russian Government to demobilize their forces, and that a reply must be made by Russia within twelve hours; failing that, the German Government would consider "it necessary to order the total mobilization of the German army on the Russian and French frontiers." The French Minister for Foreign Affairs asked what the attitude of England would be, for the German ambassador at Paris was to call at one o'clock the next day (Saturday) to know what the French Government would do in the circumstances. M. Cambon still pursued the Foreign Secretary; he told him if Britain would only declare definitely on the side of Russia and France it would decide the German attitude in favour of peace. The British Cabinet had, however, decided "not to give any pledge at the present time." Then in despatch No. 119 we read:

"Though we should have to put our policy before Parliament, we could not pledge Parliament in advance. Up to the present moment, we did not feel, and public opinion did not feel, that any treaties or obligations of this country were involved. Further developments might alter this situation and cause the Government and Parliament to take the view that intervention was justified. The preservation of the neutrality of Belgium might be, I would not say a decisive, but an important factor, in determining our attitude. Whether we proposed to Parliament to intervene or not to intervene in a war, Parliament would wish to know how we stood with regard to the neutrality of Belgium, and it might be that I should ask both France and Germany whether each was prepared to undertake an engagement that she would not be the first to violate the neutrality of Belgium.

"M. Cambon repeated his question whether we would help France if Germany made an attack on her. I said that

I could only adhere to the answer that, as far as things had gone at present, we could not take any engagement. M. Cambon urged that Germany had from the beginning rejected proposals that might have made for peace. It could not be to England's interest that France should be crushed by Germany. We should then be in a very diminished position with regard to Germany. In 1870 we had made a great mistake in allowing an enormous increase in German strength, and we should now be repeating this mistake. He asked me whether I could not submit his question to the Cabinet again. I said that the Cabinet would certainly be summoned as soon as there was some new development, but at the present moment the only answer I could give was that we could not undertake any definite engagement."

Neutrality of Belgium! Mr. Amery had told Parliament, two years before Sir Edward Grey sent his message to France and Germany, asking the Governments if they would respect the Treaty of 1839, that:

"Germany has added 80,000 men to her army for the express purpose of strengthening the force that is to march through Belgium to crush the French left. It is upon our Expeditionary Force that the brunt of that march would fall. . . . Our opponents (the Germans) will have the choice of two objectives. They can attempt either to interfere with the despatch of the Expeditionary Force or to cover an invasion, a counterstroke intended either to bring us to our knees or at any rate to prevent a considerable part of the Expeditionary Force from going, and so clear the field for the German advance through Flanders."

Neutrality of Belgium! M. Davignon in his despatch of July 24th, showed that his precautions were at least a week ahead of those of Sir Edward Grey. M. Cambon must have been amazed at the

attitude of the Foreign Secretary and the Cabinet. And what must M. Davignon have thought? No wonder those brave fellows at Liége could not understand why they were not supported by the French and English. Many men in France and Belgium must have wondered what had happened to the plans of the General Staffs. Friday, July 31st, was a black one for many people in London, but to none so black as it was to M. Cambon.

In Russia the people were in high spirits on that day. The *Times* correspondent told us what took place in Petersburg:

"About 11.30 a concourse numbering 50,000 surrounded the British Embassy. 'God save the King' alternated 'Bozhe Tzara Khranie,' and even 'Rule Britannia.' The procession also visited the French Embassy. Truth compels me to say that Russians, high and low, are waiting with the intensest anxiety to learn Great Britain's decision. The articles in the *Times* have done much to inspire hope, but if, contrary to reasonable expectation, the British Parliament insists on neutrality, there will be a terrible revulsion of feeling here."

Germany's reply to the question of the neutrality of Belgium was not satisfactory; the Secretary of State made a note of it, but was doubtful whether the German Government would return any answer at all. Hostile acts had already been committed by Belgium, so our ambassador was informed. France, of course, sent a satisfactory reply; the President of the Republic had spoken of it to the King of the Belgians. The first despatch in the White Paper addressed to the British ambassador at Brussels is dated July 31st, but M. Davignon in the Belgian official report states that, "The British Minister

asked to see me on urgent business, and made the following communication which he had hoped for some days to be able to present to me,"— and then follows the question of Belgian neutrality. So the urgent business had been delayed for some days, though the British Minister saw the Belgian Minister for Foreign Affairs on the very day he received instructions from London to put the question in Brussels about the neutrality of Belgium!

The diplomatic correspondence in the Belgian White Paper is unique; it is too naïve, too premonitory, for acceptance without question. According to the undated enclosure in the note of July 24th, to ambassadors, we are informed that:

> "All necessary steps to ensure respect of Belgian neutrality have nevertheless been taken by the Government. The Belgian army has been mobilized and is taking up such strategic positions as have been chosen to secure the defence of the country and the respect of its neutrality. The forts of Antwerp and on the Meuse have been put in a state of defence."

This was done in prospect of a Franco-German war. Then Belgium must have been convinced that she had no reason at all to guard her French frontier; all her preparations were made against Germany. The area to be protected was that through which the Meuse ran: Liége, Namur, and Dinant. But Belgium less than four months before, had received specific declarations from Germany that she would respect the neutrality and independence of Belgium. Why then should Belgium, before Servia replied to the Austrian note, leave the French frontier open, and concentrate all her military strength on

the Meuse and at Antwerp? What were the plans of the General Staffs? The British Secretary of State for War was asked in the House of Commons, in 1912, for an "explicit statement of the relative forces which would take the field in France and Belgium at the outbreak of the conflict" with Germany. On July 31st, the Belgian Minister for War issued the mobilization order to carry out the operations that were completed before the 24th.

On that Friday night it was no use discussing anything in Berlin but the demobilization of the Russian forces; nothing but demobilization would satisfy the German Government. It was demanded "in order to prevent Russia from saying all her mobilization was only directed against Austria." The German Secretary of State told the British ambassador "that both the Emperor William, at the request of the Emperor of Russia, and the German Foreign Office had even up till last night been urging Austria to show willingness to continue discussions — and telegraphic and telephonic communications from Vienna had been of a promising nature — but Russia's mobilization had spoilt everything." The Czar's telegram of the 31st, to the Kaiser, murdered peace. He said:

"It is technically impossible to discontinue our military operations which are rendered necessary by Austria's mobilization. We are far from wishing for war, and so long as the negotiations with Austria regarding Servia continue, my troops will not undertake provocative action. I give you my word upon it."

To this the German Emperor replied:

"In answer to your appeal to my friendship and your

prayer for my help I undertook mediatory action between the Austro-Hungarian Government and yours. While this action was in progress your troops were mobilized against my ally Austria-Hungary, in consequence of which, as I have already informed you, my mediation was rendered illusory. Nevertheless, I have continued it. Now, however, I receive trustworthy news of your serious preparations for war, even on my eastern frontier. The responsibility for the safety of my kingdom compels me to take definite counter measures. The efforts to maintain the peace of the world have now reached their utmost possible limit. It will not be I who am responsible for the calamity which threatens the whole civilized world. Even at this moment it lies in your power to avert it. Nobody threatens the honour and power of Russia, which could well have waited for the result of my mediation."

On the very day these telegrams passed, the Russian Government issued the following formula:

"If Austria will agree to check the advance of her troops on Servian territory; if, recognizing that the dispute between Austria and Servia has assumed a character of European interest, she will allow the great Powers to look into the matter and determine whether Servia could satisfy the Austro-Hungarian Government without impairing her rights as a sovereign State or her independence, Russia will undertake to maintain her waiting attitude."

Austria conceded everything to Russian demands, but it was technically impossible to discontinue Russian military preparations, though M. Sazonof pledged Russia to maintain her waiting attitude. Waiting to spring! The position of the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs was very much like that of Sir Edward Grey: both were sincere in their efforts to stop a European conflagration, but the mili-

tary and naval authorities in their countries were dead against them. As Mr. Churchill said, "the whole generation of men went mad," and out of the chaotic jargon of diplomacy nothing but war could come. Forty-four years of secret traffickings had raised a Frankenstein's monster and the "men who had too long played with human lives" were incompetent to deal with the consequences of their work.

In no official record of diplomatic correspondence is there to be found a despatch containing so much that is pathetic as that in the British White Paper, No. 123. It reveals a man in desperation at the knees of a symbol powerless to grant hope or mercy. Let it be clearly understood that Austria had on the 31st, agreed to the formula submitted by Russia, and that Sir Edward Grey knew it. He also knew that Russia never once gave the slightest heed to the protests made by the German Foreign Office or by the Kaiser against Russian mobilization. He knew that the "infamous proposal" in despatch No. 85 would not have been made if the warning which he gave Prince Lichnowsky, in London, had been known in Berlin on the 29th, as early as it was known in Paris. Despatch No. 123 is as follows:

SIR EDWARD GREY TO SIR E. GOSCHEN

"FOREIGN OFFICE, August 1st, 1914.

"*Sir:*

"I told the German ambassador to-day that the reply of the German Government with regard to the neutrality of Belgium was a matter of very great regret, because the neutrality of Belgium affected feeling in this country. If Germany could see her way to give the same assurance as that which had been given by France it would materially contribute to relieve anxiety and tension here. On the other

hand, if there were a violation of the neutrality of Belgium by one combatant while the other respected it, it would be extremely difficult to restrain public feeling in this country. I said that we had been discussing this question at a Cabinet meeting, and as I was authorized to tell him this, I gave him a memorandum of it.

"He asked me whether, if Germany gave a promise not to violate Belgian neutrality we would engage to remain neutral.

"I replied that I could not say that; our hands were still free, and we were considering what our attitude should be. All I could say was that our attitude would be determined largely by public opinion here, and that the neutrality of Belgium would appeal very strongly to public opinion here. I did not think that I could give a promise of neutrality on that condition alone.

"The ambassador pressed me as to whether I could not formulate conditions on which we would remain neutral. He even suggested that the integrity of France and her colonies might be guaranteed.

"I said that I felt obliged to refuse definitely any promise to remain neutral on similar terms, and I could only say that we must keep our hands free.

"I am, etc.,
"E. GREY."

Now, was the Foreign Secretary in a position to deal with the German ambassador? Most certainly not. In the first place Sir Edward Grey's hands were not free; he was bound hand and foot by the plans of the French and British General Staffs, and the conversations entered into in January, 1906. In the second place public opinion was not in any way ripe for war; every Liberal, Radical, and Socialist paper in the kingdom was dead against our participation in a European war. There was no Jingo feeling worth speaking of on July 31st. Besides, the

Cabinet was not anything like agreed: it was then in search of a *casus belli.* Then, in the third place, Sir Edward Grey and the Cabinet could not have done anything else but remain neutral, if Germany had given her pledge to respect the neutrality of Belgium; presuming, of course, the neutrality of Belgium were the determining question. If the neutrality of Belgium had been the dominant matter, we should have been obliged to abstain altogether if Germany had given the pledge, and take no action until the neutrality of Belgium were violated. Sir Edward Grey was as powerless to remain neutral as Prometheus to chase the eagle from his vitals.

What hope was there for peace after the interview recorded in despatch No. 123? What was the effect at the German Foreign Office when they heard from Prince Lichnowsky the result of his interview with Sir Edward Grey? Still, our Foreign Secretary made on August 1st, another attempt to influence Russia. He sent to the British ambassador at Petersburg instructions that he " should inform Minister for Foreign Affairs and say that if, in the consideration of the acceptance of mediation by Austria, Russia can agree to stop mobilization, it appears still to be possible to preserve peace. Presumably the matter should be discussed with German Government, also by Russian Government." The last message from the British ambassador at Petersburg was sent on August 1st, reached London August 2nd, and its contents referred to the affairs of July 31st. The only bit of news worth mentioning in that long rigmarole is, " The Emperor of Russia read his telegram to the German Emperor, to the German ambassador at the audience given to His Excellency yes-

terday. No progress whatever was made." Of course not. The only way progress towards peace could be made was by demobilizing, and that Russia would not do. No answer came from Petersburg to Sir Edward Grey's suggestion of August 1st. But from Berlin came very serious news. The British ambassador telegraphed:

"Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs said that Austria's readiness to discuss was the result of German influence at Vienna, and, had not Russia mobilized against Germany, all would have been well. But Russia by abstaining from answering Germany's demand that she should demobilize, had caused Germany to mobilize also. Russia had said that her mobilization did not necessarily imply war, and that she could perfectly well remain mobilized for months without making war. This was not the case with Germany. She had the speed and Russia had the numbers, and the safety of the German Empire forbade that Germany should allow Russia time to bring up masses of troops from all parts of her wide dominions. The situation now was that, though the Imperial Government had allowed her several hours beyond the specified time, Russia had sent no answer. Germany had therefore ordered mobilization, and the German representative at St. Petersburg had been instructed within a certain time to inform the Russian Government that the Imperial Government must regard their refusal to answer as creating a state of war."

The ambassadors at Petersburg and Vienna were perhaps too busy doubting one another's sincerity to spend much time in working for peace. In those capitals the band-of-hope spirit seems not to have pervaded the chancelleries. In London, on Saturday, August 1st, the situation was extremely grave. Late that night Lord Lansdowne, Sir Edward Carson, and Mr. Bonar Law hastened to the centre of the

diplomatic world. Germany had issued orders for the general mobilization of her army and navy; the next day, the Sabbath, to be the first day. Later it was reported that the Russians had blown up a railway bridge between Szezakowa and Granitza. The despatching business was fast drawing to a close, and the period of deeds was taking the place of words, words, words. And the war-weary world rose again, like the phœnix, from the ashes of a million battlefields, to give her best blood and bone to the insatiable god of war. Through the long Sabbath, all over the kingdom, thousands of feet tramped Channel-wards; regiment after regiment with full kit wound through London streets as the bells from tower and steeple called the folk to prayer. Ministers went to a Cabinet meeting, there to yield up to the French ambassador some token of Britain's friendship.

No. 148.

(Telegraphic.)

"FOREIGN OFFICE, August 2nd, 1914.

"After the Cabinet this morning I gave M. Cambon the following memorandum:

"'I am authorized to give an assurance that, if the German fleet comes into the Channel or through the North Sea to undertake hostile operations against French coast or shipping, the British fleet will give all the protection in its power.'

"'This assurance is of course subject to the policy of His Majesty's Government receiving the support of Parliament, and must not be taken as binding His Majesty's Government to take any action until the above contingency of action by the German fleet takes place.'"

Having been treated to so many "not binding"

agreements the French ambassador must have wondered how they all stuck together. It was, however, a fairly safe pledge to give; for the Cabinet knew pretty nearly where the German fleet then was, and just about how much chance it had of interfering with the passage of the Expeditionary Force across the Channel. But there are two more paragraphs:

"I pointed out that we had very large questions and most difficult issues to consider, and that Government felt that they could not bind themselves to declare war upon Germany necessarily if war broke out between France and Germany to-morrow, but it was essential to the French Government, whose fleet had long been concentrated in the Mediterannean, to know how to make their dispositions with their north coast entirely undefended. We therefore thought it necessary to give them this assurance. It did not bind us to go to war with Germany unless the German fleet took the action indicated, but it did give a security to France that would enable her to settle the disposition of her own Mediterranean fleet.

"M. Cambon asked me about the violation of Luxembourg. I told him the doctrine laid down by Lord Derby and Lord Clarendon in 1867. He asked me what we should say about the violation of the neutrality of Belgium. I said that was a much more important matter; we were considering what statement we should make in Parliament to-morrow — in effect, whether we should declare violation of Belgian neutrality to be a *casus belli*. I told him what had been said to the German ambassador on this point."

It is evident the Cabinet was not agreed about Belgium two days after the Foreign Secretary had asked the Belgian Government whether they would maintain to the utmost of their power their neutrality. Sir Edward Grey must have found himself in a very difficult position with the Cabinet on August

2nd. What Continental Governments thought of the situation can be guessed; and our impatient friends in Russia, and France, and Belgium, were no doubt amazed at the delay of the British Cabinet in coming to the support of the military and naval experts. Some members of the Cabinet learned more that Sunday about secret diplomacy and its consequences than they will ever wish to know again in their political lives. Perhaps the replies of the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary to questions put in the House on several occasions as to our military obligations came like ghosts into the council room. But —

> "Who can be wise, amazed, temperate and furious,
> Loyal and neutral, in a moment? No man."

In Whitehall as Ministers passed along to Downing Street to attend the second Cabinet meeting, a crowd of people parted to let a regiment march through. Save for a short cheer from a few young men, the troops filed along an avenue of silent, respectful friends. Two Ministers strode round the corner into Downing Street unnoticed by the crowd; they were going to a meeting where a *casus belli* was to be found. The troops tramped on past the War Office and the Admiralty, but no one knew their destination.

CHAPTER XIII

THE FOREIGN SECRETARY'S STATEMENT

"If generous honesty, valour, and plain dealing be the cognizance of thy family, or characteristic of the country, hold fast such inclinations sucked in with thy first breath, and which lay in the cradle with thee. Fall not into transforming degenerations, which under the old name create a new nation."

— Sir Thomas Browne.

Going to the House of Commons on Monday, August 3rd, a member might have been forgiven for loitering a little while in the halls of Westminster and St. Stephen. What scenes in our history came thronging to the mind! What an enacting and annulling and amending of statutes! What change and decay of customs and of men! What beginnings and endings of wars! What speeches on the benefits the wars would bring to the people! Memories of North and Burke rising to mock one, and abruptly turn one's thoughts to the last dispute between us and folk of our own stock. Loitering there the mind became so full that time lost its significance; and memory so crowded the halls with the ghosts of our national drama that never ends, that Cromwell seemed to pass under the arch out into the Palace Yard.

The House was full long before Mr. Speaker appeared with mace and chaplain. Never so many came to prayers before. How speedily the prelimi-

naries were dealt with after the service. The haste to get to war eclipsed anything ever done to make for peace and happiness. Earlier in the forenoon the whisper, "Are we in it?" passed from member to member in the lobby. The Foreign Secretary had not been speaking for more than five minutes when the question was approached. Those who had relied on the answers of the Prime Minister and Sir Edward Grey to the many questions put in time past regarding secret understandings with France, did not lose hope until they heard the following:

"I come first, now, to the question of British obligations. I have assured the House — and the Prime Minister has assured the House more than once — that if any crisis such as this arose, we should come before the House of Commons and be able to say to the House that it was free to decide what the British attitude should be, that we would have no secret engagement which we should spring upon the House, and tell the House that, because we had entered into that engagement, there was an obligation of honour upon this country. I will deal with that point to clear the ground first."

These were strange words to come from a Foreign Secretary at such a time. Members had assembled to hear a complete statement of the foreign imbroglio. Were they to be treated to an explanation and a defence of what Mr. Asquith and Sir Edward Grey had said in reply to questions? Surely the answers when they were given were quite sufficient to dispose of the ugly rumours. Why unearth all those answers now? Was it not enough, the assurance that no compact of any kind committing the country to obligations of war would be entered into without the consent of the House? Even the Foreign

Secretary, himself, in November, 1911, had said:

"I saw a comment made the other day, when these articles (Moroccan secret agreements) were published, that if a Government would keep little things secret, *a fortiori* they would keep big things secret. That is absolutely untrue. There may be reasons why a Government should make secret arrangements of that kind if they are not things of first-rate importance — if they are subsidiary to matters of great importance. But that is the very reason the British Government should not make secret engagements which commit Parliament to obligations of war. It would be foolish to do it. No British Government could embark upon a war without public opinion behind it, and such engagements as there are which really commit Parliament to anything of that kind are contained in Treaties or Agreements which have been laid before the House. For ourselves, we have not made a single secret article of any kind since we came into office."

That statement was made just one year before he exchanged letters with the French ambassador, and about six years after he authorized the conversations between the British and French military and naval experts. There was nothing to spring on the House! On August 3rd, the House was quite free to decide what the British attitude would be. Quite! It could recall the fleet if it thought fit, it could countermand the orders to the Expeditionary Force, and it could tear up the plans of General Staffs. The mockery of it all! when Reuter told us what was happening in Petersburg:

"St. Petersburg, August 3rd.

"Crowds of thousands of people made demonstrations to-day before the British Embassy here. Sir George Buchanan, the ambassador, appeared at the window and

addressed the crowd. Amid frantic cheering he declared England's perfect sympathy with Russia. The Secretary of the Embassy, standing beside the ambassador, then raised cheers for Russia."

Did the British ambassador at Petersburg believe the House of Commons was free to do anything else but vote supply? And what would it have mattered to the Government if one hundred members challenged a division on a vote of credit? There were five hundred to vote for it. Opinion in the House was ripe enough, if it were not nearly ripe in the country. The week end had made all the difference. Why the statement was not made on the Friday, or on the Thursday when Sir Edward Grey was told repeatedly that a British declaration to support France and Russia would have made for peace, must be obvious to any one who has gone into the whole matter. The Cabinet were not agreed until Sunday night. There were other weighty reasons, but that was the chief one. Preparations had gone too far on Sunday for the Government to decline to honour the negotiations of the "Commander of the Forces."

Sir Edward Grey's explanation of what took place in January, 1906, is curious, looked at in the light of the Delcassé interview and the Lausanne revelations referred to elsewhere. He said:

"In this present crisis up till yesterday, we have also given no promise of anything more than diplomatic support — up till yesterday no promise of more than diplomatic support. Now I must make this question of obligation clear to the House. I must go back to the first Moroccan crisis in 1906. That was the time of the Algeciras Conference, and it came at a time of very great difficulty to

His Majesty's Government when a general election was in progress, and Ministers were scattered over the country, and I — spending three days a week in my constituency and three days at the Foreign Office — was asked the question whether if that crisis developed into war between France and Germany we would give armed support. I said then that I could promise nothing to any foreign Power unless it was subsequently to receive the whole-hearted support of public opinion here if the occasion arose. I said, in my opinion, if war was forced upon France then on the question of Morocco — a question which had just been the subject of agreement between this country and France, an agreement exceedingly popular on both sides — that if out of that agreement war was forced on France at that time, in my view public opinion in this country would have rallied to the material support of France. I gave no promise, but I expressed that opinion during the crisis, as far as I can remember, almost in the same words, to the French ambassador and the German ambassador at the same time. I made no promise, and I used no threats; but I expressed that opinion. That position was accepted by the French Government, but they said to me at the time — and I think very reasonably —' if you think it possible that the public opinion of Great Britain might, should a sudden crisis arise, justify you in giving to France the armed support which you cannot promise in advance, you will not be able to give that support, even if you wish to give it, when the time comes, unless some conversations have already taken place between naval and military experts.' There was force in that. I agreed to it, and authorized those conversations to take place, but on the distinct understanding that nothing which passed between military and naval experts should bind either Government or restrict in any way their freedom to make a decision as to whether or not they would give that support when the time arose."

Nothing binding! But what did the French Government care about that; all they wanted was his

consent to the conversations. That was all-sufficient. Once conversations had gone so far as to affect the military and naval positions of the two countries, the experts and General Staffs would see to it that Britain would be unable to leave France in the lurch when the " sudden crisis " arose. No one can blame the French ambassador for taking every advantage of the new Foreign Secretary; in the game of diplomacy M. Cambon won all along the line. But was it not bad enough to leave the making of war and peace to a Cabinet; bad enough to let the fate of a nation remain in the hands of diplomatists? To yield up the most vital interests of our people to the whims and caprices of militarists was the most colossal blunder a Liberal statesman could be guilty of in these days of armament-rings and a subsidized Jingo press.

We now understand many cryptic utterances of Conservative statesmen delivered during the month of December, 1905. Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman had spoken at the Albert Hall on armaments and suggested a reduction of expenditure. Five days afterwards, Mr. Balfour replied to the new Prime Minister's speech. Mr. Balfour said:

" I noticed with amazement that Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, at the Albert Hall, in the speech to which I have just referred, announced to his audience that he meant to cut down the cost, and, as I understood him, with the cost the number and magnitude of the defensive forces of the Crown — Army and Navy, as the case may be. I wonder whether he consulted the present Secretary of State for War before giving that pledge. I doubt whether he did. . . . His pledge to reduce the cost of our armaments and the magnitude of our armaments is a pledge not given with

knowledge, not given after study, not given in consequence of our Imperial responsibilities."

Did Mr. Balfour mean that the new Liberal Government had not only taken over the foreign policy of their predecessors, but they had also taken over the secret understandings with France to give armed support when the "sudden crisis" would arise? What else could Mr. Balfour mean? Lord Percy, the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs said, just before his Government resigned, that, "no one doubted for a moment that the Liberal party would faithfully fulfil the obligations which the Government had already entered into with various countries. They would, of course, fulfil in the spirit and the letter the understanding which we had happily made with France." Why should Mr. Balfour wonder whether Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman had consulted Mr. Haldane, the Secretary for War, before suggesting reduction of "cost of armaments and the magnitude of our armaments," if it were not a matter of our being committed to obligations of war with France? Continuity of foreign policy entailed continuity of armed support, and all the diplomatic sins of political forefathers were inherited by the Puritan fathers, who were pledged to the country to walk in the paths of freedom, righteousness, and peace.

The House had listened to the Foreign Secretary's explanation with the receptiveness of children, but without their insistent inquisitiveness. The House was not in an analytical mood, for the combative instinct does not carry analysis with it. The explanation of how the letters came to be exchanged with M. Cambon was accepted without amazement:

"The Agadir crisis came — another Moroccan crisis — and throughout that I took precisely the same line that had been taken in 1906. But subsequently, in 1912, after discussion and consideration in the Cabinet it was decided that we ought to have a definite understanding in writing, which was to be only in the form of an unofficial letter, and these considerations which took place were not binding upon the freedom of either Government; and on the 22nd of November, 1912, I wrote to the French ambassador the letter which I will now read to the House; and I received from him a letter in similar terms in reply. The letter which I have to read to the House is this, and it will be known to the public now as the record that, whatever took place between military and naval experts, they were not binding engagements upon the Government:

"'My dear Ambassador: From time to time in recent years the French and British military and naval experts have consulted together. It has always been understood that such consultation does not restrict the freedom of either Government to decide at any future time whether or not to assist the other by armed force. We have agreed that consultation between experts is not and ought not to be regarded as an engagement that commits either Government to action in a contingency that has not yet arisen and may never arise. The disposition, for instance, of the French and British fleets respectively at the present moment is not based upon an engagement to co-operate in war.

"'You have, however, pointed out that, if either Government have grave reason to expect an unprovoked attack by a third Power, it might become essential to know whether it could in that event depend upon the armed assistance of the other.

"'I agree that, if either Government had grave reason to expect an unprovoked attack by a third Power, or something that threatened the general peace, it should immediately discuss with the other whether both Governments should act together to prevent aggression and to preserve

peace, and, if so, what measures they would be prepared to take in common.' "

The most important sentence in the letter which is given in full in the White Paper, not published until August 6th, was *not read* to the House:

" If these measures involved action, the plans of the General Staffs would at once be taken into consideration, and the Governments would then decide what effect should be given to them."

A remarkable letter! If there had been a paragraph in it on the neutrality of Belgium it would have been complete. But what it had to do with the Agadir crisis no one but the Foreign Secretary knows. It bears a date twelve months after the Agadir affair was closed. It is an amazing document, look at it how you will. It might seem to some people that it should bear a date somewhere about the beginning of July, 1911; others might think a date not later than July 29th, 1914, would be nearer the mark. There is, however, this to be considered: when Lord Hugh Cecil heckled the Prime Minister in February, 1913, he described the position quite fairly; but, on the other hand, in the session of 1913, both in the Commons and the Lords, Ministers stated quite frankly that it was left to the French fleet to bear the brunt of looking after British interests in the Mediterranean.

If the House had been given the last paragraph of the letter it would have been in a better position to understand the Foreign Secretary's desperate pleading for sympathy for the undefended northern and western coasts of France. He went on to say:

" The French fleet is now in the Mediterranean, and the

northern and western coasts of France are absolutely undefended. The French fleet being concentrated in the Mediterranean, the situation is very different from what it used to be, because the friendship which has grown up between the two countries has given them a sense of security that there was nothing to be feared from us. The French coasts are absolutely undefended. The French fleet is in the Mediterranean, and has for some years been concentrated there because of the feeling of confidence and friendship which has existed between the two countries. . . . If we say nothing at this moment, what is France to do with her fleet in the Mediterranean? If she leaves it there, with no statement from us as to what we will do, she leaves her northern and western coasts absolutely undefended, at the mercy of a German fleet coming down the Channel, to do as it pleases in a war of life and death between them. If we say nothing, it may be that the French fleet is withdrawn from the Mediterranean. . . . We have not kept a fleet in the Mediterranean which is equal to dealing alone with a combination of other fleets in the Mediterranean."

So it was friendship and confidence that kept the French fleet in the Mediterranean and left the northern and western coasts absolutely undefended. The conversations between the British and French experts had nothing to do with it. The General Staffs, trusting wholly to the friendship which had grown up, left the coasts of Brittany, Normandy, Biscay, and the Straits, absolutely undefended. According to military laws, they ought to have been shot. In the early days of M. Delcassé there must have been keener men on the staff, for in July, 1905, the Foreign Secretary of France said, "The *entente* between the two countries, and the coalition of their navies, constitutes such a formidable machine of

naval war that neither Germany, nor any other Power, would dare to face such an overwhelming force at sea." Friendship and confidence then evidently did not supersede military resource and naval foresight.

The British Foreign Secretary made great play with the story of the French fleet being concentrated in the Mediterranean, and the French coasts being absolutely undefended. In the French despatches in the Yellow Book, however, there is nothing about the French fleet being concentrated in the Mediterranean, and the northern and western coasts being absolutely undefended. Indeed all reference to the disposition of the French fleet and the defenceless position of her northern and western coasts are suppressed in French despatches. Perhaps the story was for British consumption only. Singularly enough the French diplomatic documents throw quite another light on the question of the French fleet. It was on August 1st that the question was discussed between Sir Edward Grey and M. Cambon. The French ambassador then sent word to the French Prime Minister that "Sir Edward Grey will propose to his colleagues that they should declare that the fleet will oppose the passage of the German squadrons through the Straits; or, if they passed the Straits, to any demonstration on the French coasts." That was the day before the matter was discussed by the Cabinet. The authorization to this proposal was given by the Cabinet the next day; but in the French ambassador's despatch to his Government he did not refer to the disposition of the fleet; he did not say why the British Cabinet had given the pledge to assist the French "if a

German fleet were to undertake acts of war against the French coasts or the French mercantile marine."

On August 2nd, M. Viviani, the French Prime Minister, telegraphed to the French ambassador at London as follows:

"In communicating to the Chambers the same declaration that Sir Edward Grey has made to you, of which your last telegram gives me the text, I will add that we have herein obtained from Great Britain a first support, the value of which is precious to us.

"I propose, moreover, to indicate that the assistance which Great Britain has the intention of giving to France, with the view of protecting the French coasts or the French mercantile marine, would be so exerted as to afford equal support to our Navy by the English Fleet, in the case of a Franco-German conflict, in the Atlantic as well as in the North Sea and in the English Channel."

This does not coincide with the statement made in the House by Sir Edward Grey. If the French fleet were concentrated in the Mediterranean and the northern and western coasts were absolutely undefended, how could the French fleet fear an attack from the German navy in the Atlantic, or in the North Sea, or in the English Channel? Either the French Prime Minister did not know where his fleet was at the time, or Sir Edward Grey had been misinformed by the French ambassador. The British Foreign Secretary was certain when he notified our ambassador at Paris on August 2nd, of the Cabinet decision to give naval support to France, that the French fleet was concentrated in the Mediterranean, and that the north coast was "entirely undefended." And we were led to believe such was the disposition of the French fleet when the Foreign Secretary spoke

to the House on August 3rd, and made out an extremely pathetic case which served its purpose.

The first half of the speech was devoted to France and the second half to Belgium. He referred to the German reply to his question about observing the neutrality of Belgium, but he said nothing about his interview with Prince Lichnowsky. All the House got from him on the real situation was just so much as would help his case and no more. After dealing with his communication to the Belgian Government he said:

"It now appears from the news I have received to-day — which has come quite recently, and I am not yet quite sure how far it has reached me in an accurate form — that an ultimatum has been given to Belgium by Germany, the object of which was to offer Belgium friendly relations with Germany on condition that she would facilitate the passage of German troops through Belgium. Well, sir, until one has these things absolutely definitely, up to the last moment, I do not wish to say all that one would say if one were in the position to give the House full, complete, and absolute information on the point. We were sounded in the course of last week as to whether if a guarantee were given that, after the war, Belgian integrity would be preserved that would content us. We replied that we could not bargain away whatever interests or obligations we had in Belgian neutrality."

That was an absolutely misleading account of what had taken place between Berlin and London. "I do not wish to say all!" All! no indeed, it would not have done to say all on August 3rd. But, then, it was only the House of Commons he was addressing; a House of Commons without the White Paper, without documents of any kind relating to the mo-

mentous business it was supposed to deal with. Suppose he had informed the House that up to Friday, July 31st, he had been told over and over again by both Russia and France that a declaration of British solidarity with those countries would have made for peace. Suppose he had told the House that the German Chancellor would not have made the suggestion about Belgian integrity after the war, if the Foreign Secretary had let the British ambassador at Berlin know about the warning given to Prince Lichnowsky, as soon as he let the British ambassador at Paris know of it. To refer to despatch No. 85 without giving the House the information in despatches Nos. 98 and 102, and the explanation of the three despatches, was not quite honourable to say the least.

"We worked for peace up to the last moment, and beyond the last moment. How hard, how persistently, and how earnestly we strove for peace last week, the House will see from the papers that will be before it."

Strove for peace! Yes, that was true. And what a striving! Bound hand and foot from the beginning to support France, and working night and day for peace. It was one of the greatest triumphs of French diplomacy since the days of Talleyrand. So the House was left with its hands quite free to decide — what? That the will of the experts shall prevail. Then, having performed the duties of a representative body, members passed from the period when costly armaments were sure preventives of war, and foreign friendships the safest guardians of peace, out into a world distraught in which a "whole generation of men went mad and tore themselves to pieces."

While the Foreign Secretary was busy explaining himself to the House of Commons, the French Government thought it was high time to do something practical in the interests of Belgium, so they offered military support. The British ambassador at Brussels sent the following message to Sir Edward Grey:

"French Government have offered through their military attaché the support of five French Army Corps to the Belgian Government. Following reply had been received to-day:

"'We are sincerely grateful to the French Government for offering eventual support. In the actual circumstances, however, we do not propose to appeal to the guarantee of the Powers. Belgian Government will decide later on the action which they may think it necessary to take.'"

This offer of five army corps from the French is suppressed in the Belgian White Paper. The reason for this is evident in the communication M. Davignon made on August 3rd, to the German ambassador:

"The German Government stated in their note of August 2nd, that according to reliable information French forces intended to march on the Meuse via Givet and Namur, and that Belgium, in spite of her best intentions, would not be in a position to repulse, without assistance, an advance of French troops. The German Government, therefore, considered themselves compelled to anticipate this attack and to violate Belgian territory. In these circumstances, Germany proposed to the Belgian Government to adopt a friendly attitude towards her, and undertook, on the conclusion of peace, to guarantee the integrity of the Kingdom and its possessions to their full extent. The note added that if Belgium put difficulties in the way of the advance of German troops, Germany would be compelled to consider her as an enemy, and to leave the ultimate ad-

justment of the relations between the two States to the decision of arms."

Further, the Belgian Minister said that if France violated the neutrality of Belgium, her army " would offer the most vigorous resistance to the invader."

In Sir Edward Grey's message to the British ambassador at Berlin he refers to the telegram from the King of the Belgians to King George, and mentions the proposal of the German Government for a free passage for troops through Belgium; but nothing is said of the French plan, alleged by the Germans, to march on the Meuse.

The Germans entered Belgian territory on the morning of August 4th. When the House of Commons met, the Prime Minister made a short statement, and sent an ultimatum to the German Government respecting the neutrality of Belgium, calling for a reply before midnight. The Army Reserve was ordered out on permanent service.

That same evening the British ambassador at Berlin received his passports, and after eleven o'clock that night a state of war existed between Germany and Great Britain.

The saddest note of all was, perhaps, that from the French ambassador at Brussels to the French Government:

" The Chef du Cabinet of the Belgian Ministry of War has asked the French military attaché to prepare at once for the co-operation and contact of French troops with the Belgian Army, pending the results of the appeal to the guaranteeing Powers now being made. Orders have therefore been given to Belgian provincial governors not to regard movements of French troops as a violation of the frontier."

Co-operation! The cries at Liége and Namur were, "Where are the French? Where are the English?" And General Leman who thought it possible to hold Liége for three days, astonished the whole world by the heroic struggle which kept the Germans at bay for ten days!

Neither the Prime Minister nor the Foreign Secretary in their speeches on August 3rd, and 6th, mentioned the interview recorded in despatch No. 123. The whole case Mr. Asquith made against Germany was based upon the "infamous proposal" despatch No. 85. When towards the end of August the Foreign Secretary was asked "whether the proposals of Prince Lichnowsky were submitted to and considered by the Cabinet, and if not, why proposals involving such far-reaching possibilities were thus rejected," Sir Edward Grey replied, "These were personal suggestions made by the ambassador on August 1st, and without authority to alter the conditions of neutrality proposed by the German Chancellor." Then followed a rambling statement about Cabinet efforts on the 2nd, to find conditions on which Britain would remain neutral; but no word about Prince Lichnowsky's suggestions being submitted to the Cabinet. The Foreign Secretary's explanation of the reason why he did not refer to No. 123 is as follows:

"I have been asked why I did not refer to No. 123 in the White Paper when I spoke in the House on August 3rd. If I had referred to suggestions to us as to conditions of neutrality I must have referred to No. 85, the proposals made not personally by the ambassador but officially by the

German Chancellor, which were so condemned by the Prime Minister subsequently, and this would have made the case against the German Government much stronger than I did make it in my speech. I deliberately refrained from doing that then."

The best that can be said for that answer is that the Foreign Secretary had not taken the precaution of reading again his speech before replying to Mr. Keir Hardie. Not only did the Foreign Secretary refer to No. 85, but he scored one of his biggest points in telling the House what his reply was to the suggested "bargain." But the important point is not whether the interview referred to in No. 123 was discussed by the Cabinet, but whether Sir Edward Grey told the Cabinet that the "bargain" would not have been made had the German Chancellor known early on the 29th, that the Foreign Secretary "was about to warn Prince Lichnowsky not to count on our standing aside." The "bargain" was suggested before the German Chancellor knew that Britain might not stand aside, and before the Foreign Secretary asked the Belgian Government what they intended to do about their neutrality. The "bargain" was suggested on the night of July 29th, and the first communication from the Foreign Office, recorded in the White Paper, to the British ambassador at Brussels, was sent on August 1st. If the Cabinet had known on the 30th, the contents of despatch No. 98, there might have been no necessity for sending No. 101, which contained the reply to No. 85. So little did the Cabinet think of the question of the neutrality of Belgium that they had not agreed to make it the *casus belli* until the even-

ing of Sunday, August 2nd,— four whole days after the German Chancellor spoke to the British ambassador at Berlin about it.

The suggestions made by the German ambassador on August 1st, were personal and offered without authority, but does despatch No. 123 indicate in the slightest degree that the Foreign Secretary was under the impression when he spoke to the German ambassador that he was dealing with a man who had no authority? If Sir Edward Grey doubted the authority of Prince Lichnowsky, why did he neglect to ask, in his message to Sir E. Goschen, if the ambassador had authority from the Berlin Foreign Office to discuss terms of British neutrality? For the British Foreign Secretary to try to escape from a dilemma by casting doubt on the authority of the accredited agent of the German Government was not clever; because the Foreign Secretary had at least five opportunities of finding out from Sir E. Goschen whether Prince Lichnowsky had power to act for the German Government.

But, whether the German ambassador had authority or not, whether the suggestions were personal or official, the Foreign Secretary declined the lot,— lock, stock, and barrel. He " felt obliged to refuse definitely any promise to remain neutral on similar terms." Britain must keep her hand free, so that the Government's attitude might be determined largely by public opinion. " The neutrality of Belgium would appeal very strongly to public opinion here," but he " did not think that we could give a promise of neutrality on that condition alone." Such a maze of contradiction and equivocation was enough to make the wretched German ambassador

wonder whether the British Foreign Secretary had authority to make a direct statement on any question but free hands and agreements that would not bind the Government.

Thus, secret diplomacy, conversations of military and naval experts, and the plans of General Staffs, launched this nation into war. And Germany sent her troops into the small, weak, State of Luxembourg, without a word of remonstrance from Britain, the guardian of international "scraps of paper." The Jingoes, and many of those "in the know," got what they had sedulously toiled for through eight long years of scares in which every brutish instinct was stirred. The only regret some of them had was that the War Office could not put 500,000 men into Belgium when the trouble arose.

Jingoes there are in every country; but the difference between the Prussian and the British cult is that Prussian Jingoes are soldiers as a rule and British Jingoes are not. Whether it is better to let military Jingoes run an empire than trust its fate to commercial Jingoes, is a question that must wait solution until the empire that has always spent many more millions on armaments than Germany, destroys Prussian militarism. Is it then too much to hope that when the empire that has had little rest from wars and expeditions, teaches the empire that has known very little war since 1870, how to suffer military defeat as well as diplomatic humiliation, that a Jingo will find it as difficult to lodge upon British territory as Germans to find their place in the sun?

The question of Who began it? caused little controversy during August, because it was considered most unpatriotic to blame any one but the Kaiser

or the Crown Prince or the German Chancellor or the German ambassador at Petersburg or Vienna. Some people went so far as to deny any credit to an Austrian. Few were as wise about it as the man on the 'bus who said, "Well, guv'ner, we're in it; that's all." But no war can be fought without a scapegoat; it is almost as necessary as a map and pins with coloured heads. In starting out to fix responsibility on some person or Power, it is essential that the date from which investigation starts should be selected with certainty to embrace all those issues and events which are relevant to the foreign policies of the countries involved in the dispute. To begin with the murder of the Archduke is sensational, but much too recent; it is convenient for the theory that the Kaiser dictated the Austrian note to Servia; that, however, is its only merit.

Not through Servia or Austria are the signposts to be found which will enable us to retrace our steps to the place and date when we fell "into transforming degenerations." We must look south, towards Agadir, then to Fez, and back through Tangier, Spain, and Paris, to London, where the Anglo-French Agreement was signed April 6th, 1904. It was not a person, or some one particular Power, that was responsible for this war. It was a system that brought it about; and that system was secret diplomacy.

Who then is to blame for secret diplomacy? The people of the nations which practise it; and those nations boasting the freest institutions should bear the greatest responsibility.

CHAPTER XIV

RECRIMINATION

"THAT there exists between France and Germany a sentimental animosity; and that between Germany and England there is an economic rivalry, we do not deny; but what we deny is that there exists from country to country, between these three great nations, any fundamental and irreconcilable antagonism. It is, therefore, our claim to put an end to all enmity between them and do away with all animosity. War would no longer settle anything. The times are gone when the conqueror destroyed the vanquished people and reduced it to slavery. A war would henceforward be a useless disaster and vain crime."

— Anatole France, London, December 11th, 1913.

Of all the many organizations started in Germany and Britain to promote a clearer understanding and a better feeling between the two peoples, the Albert Committee under the presidency of Lord Avebury, was the best. It invited the co-operation of every one interested in seeing that our relations with Germany should be conducted according to reason and not clouded and endangered by ignorance and prejudice. The Anglo-German Friendship Committee and the Associated Councils of Churches for fostering friendly relations between the two peoples, were strong bodies. These Councils and Committees enrolled most of Britain's worthiest men. How powerless they were to avert the strife when the

diplomatists took control of affairs in July, 1914, is a lesson which must not be forgotten. The bench of Bishops, the leading nonconformist divines, the Catholic prelates, eminent professors, members of the Houses of Parliament, distinguished men of science, literature, and art, were as little children in the hands of the men of the chancelleries.

Looking over the pre-war literature published by these Councils and Committees is a heart-breaking business. The article published by Mr. Basil Williams in the *Edinburgh Review,* October, 1909, reads like pages from a Utopia written long years before Sir Thomas More ordered Wolsey from the precincts of the Commons. In that article Mr. Williams says " for more than four hundred years Englishmen and Germans have fought side by side in almost every European war." And he quotes Stubbs:

" England in spite of the Reformation maintained her alliance with Germany: her instincts were German and her antipathies were anti-French. As the Hapsburgs divided and grew weak, England sought new allies among the younger Powers; but in all the great struggles of Europe she has had Germany, whether Austrian or Prussian, on her side."

Then Mr. Williams goes on to show how the grievous work of ignorance and prejudice brought about misunderstanding and enmity. He says:

" Barely four years ago men of responsibility in Germany were quite convinced that England designed a sudden attack upon their country without any previous declaration of war or other warning. Fears have been expressed that Hamburg, lying, it may be noted, some fifty miles up a river well

fortified on either bank, is liable to bombardment by the British fleet; and many Germans have long seriously believed that we intend to annihilate the German navy while it is still comparatively small and an easy morsel for ours. German writers and even German statesmen see in England's every act of friendship to another Power a fixed policy of isolating Germany."

Was Mr. Lloyd George conscious of such a fixed policy on January 1st, 1914, when in the *Daily Chronicle* he gave his views on armaments? He said:

"Both countries seem to have realized what ought to have been fairly obvious long ago, that they have nothing to gain and everything to lose by a quarrel, and that they have everything to gain and nothing to lose by reverting to the old policy of friendliness which had been maintained, until within recent years, for centuries between Germany and this country. . . . The German army is vital, not merely to the existence of the German Empire, but to the very life and independence of the nation itself, surrounded as Germany is by other nations each of which possesses armies almost as powerful as her own. We forget that, while we insist upon a 60 per cent. superiority (so far as our naval strength is concerned) over Germany being essential to guarantee the integrity of our own shores — Germany herself has nothing like that superiority over France alone, and she has, of course, in addition, to reckon with Russia on her eastern frontier. Germany has nothing which approximates to a two-Power standard. She has, therefore, become alarmed by recent events, and is spending huge sums of money on the expansion of her military resources."

What the "recent events" which occasioned alarm in Germany were we now know. And since ministers have started their campaigns of recrimination on the

platform and in the Press much has been brought to light which shows how difficult it is to get at the truth of foreign affairs and armaments under the present system. Much has been written and said recently in connection with the Berlin conversations. Since the war began the political and diplomatic giants of Britain and Germany have been busily at work informing their peoples of one another's perfidy and chicanery. A pretty spectacle for decent simple folk! Perhaps it would have been better to leave the mud at the bottom of the well and let the rank water lie undisturbed. It is not nice to find political leaders of any country hoodwinking the people, saying things which are not true, making friendly speeches to cover unfriendly business. Again the year 1912 has been brought into the limelight, this time by Mr. Asquith, who in a speech at Cardiff, October 2, 1914, told us more about the negotiations which passed between Germany and Britain, than he condescended to tell the House of Commons in the debates of 1912. Referring no doubt to the conversations between Lord Haldane and the German Chancellor, Mr. Asquith said:

"We laid down — and I wish to call not only your attention, but the attention of the whole world to this, when so many false legends are now being invented and circulated — in the following year, in the year 1912, we laid down, in terms carefully approved by the Cabinet and which I will textually quote, what our relations with Germany ought in our view to be. We said, and we communicated this to the German Government: 'Britain declares that she will neither make nor join in any unprovoked attack on Germany. Aggression upon Germany is not the subject, and forms no part of any treaty, understanding, or combi-

nation to which Britain is a party; nor will she become a party to any thing that has such an object.' There is nothing ambiguous or equivocal about that. But that was not enough for German statesmanship. They wanted us to go further. They asked us to pledge ourselves absolutely to neutrality in the event of Germany being engaged in war — and this, mind you, at a time when Germany was enormously increasing both her aggressive and defensive resources, and especially upon the sea. They asked us for a free hand, so far as we were concerned, if and when they selected the opportunity to overbear, to dominate the European world. To such a demand but one answer was possible, and that was the answer we gave."

This is exceedingly interesting, for it proves the utter impossibility of the House ever learning from Ministers just how international affairs stand. On July 25th, 1912, Mr. Asquith made a speech in the House of Commons and referred to the Berlin conversations begun by Lord Haldane six months earlier in that year. Question after question had been put by private members on the subject during the spring without drawing much definite information from the Treasury. It was a matter for congratulation in July to learn from the Prime Minister that:

"Our relations with the great German Empire are, I am glad to say, at this moment — and I feel sure are likely to remain — relations of amity and good will. My noble friend Lord Haldane paid a visit to Berlin early in the year. He entered upon conversations and an interchange of views there which have been continued since in a spirit of perfect frankness and friendship both on one side or the other and in which I am glad to say we now have the advantage of the participation of a very distinguished diplomatist in the person of the German Ambassador."

There is nothing ambiguous or equivocal about that. But what would have happened if the statement made by Mr. Asquith at Cardiff, October, 1914, had been made in July, 1912, to the Commons when he said to the House:

"I say, and I say this deliberately, we have no cause, and so far as I know no occasion, for quarrel with any country in any part of the world."

Did the Prime Minister then know that Germany had asked for a free hand and that Britain should pledge herself absolutely to neutrality in the event of Germany being engaged in war? These, then, were the amicable conversations carried on between Lord Haldane and the German Chancellor! But why did Germany test us in that way? In July, 1912, according to rumour she had just about reached the end of her financial tether; her military preparations had been then stretched nearly to the utmost; she had reached the climax of expenditure on her navy — notwithstanding Mr. Asquith's statement at Cardiff about Germany in 1912 enormously increasing her aggressive and defensive resources, especially on sea. He was misinformed. Though her gross naval expenditure rose, Germany reduced her expenditure on new construction by £500,000 in 1912; but she saw both France and Russia vote an additional £6,963,124 on new construction for 1912–13. Russia, alone for that year spent more on new construction than Germany did. Why should Germany ask us for a free hand? Did she glean from the amicable conversations that we were fettered, and wish to test the strength of our engagements? Anyway, her request that we should remain neutral shows

how much faith she placed in the declaration of the Cabinet, referred to by Mr. Asquith. Germany then no doubt knew more about Britain's obligations to France and Russia than did the vast majority of the members of the House of Commons.

The result of all the frank and friendly conversations between Germany and Britain in 1912 was seen in the new military laws of France and Germany. Ever since Britain departed from her isolated position in diplomacy, since she threw in her lot with France and aided and abetted France in the sordid schemes of exploiting territory in Africa, Germany has worked with unremitting energy to perfect her military system and build up a modern navy which would be the equal of that of France. What else was to be expected? When Jingo ministers in Britain and France express such sentiments against Germany as those attributed to M. Delcassé and Lord Roberts no other result could be looked for than German military and naval preparation on the highest scale. Blame Germany for her ruthless policy in taking French territory, blame France for her policy in Africa, curse the Kaiser for all the sins of divine-right monarchs, and when the full course of all-round denunciation is complete, there is left the palpable conspiracy of Entente Powers to isolate Germany. Diplomacy destroyed every bridge raised by pacifists in the principal European States, to march the workers into an international corps which would overthrow militarism and bureaucratic rule. Diplomacy in dividing Europe into two hostile camps stimulated militarism in all its branches; in each State it fostered the vast international armament interests; it raised up a literature of enmity

and hatred; and threw the fate of democracies into the hands of military and naval experts. After the British Foreign Office became entangled in the meshes of the Continental System, war-lords flourished to greater extent than at any time since 1870. The outcome of ten years of diplomatic labour in entente enterprises amounted to suspicion and enmity, distrust and hate, leading up to the only possible climax,— a Continental War. And the pity and pain of it is that the British Foreign Secretary had no desire to engulf his country in war. Labouring for peace under such a system was a task Sisyphus would not envy. What effort worth while could be made by the most pacific Foreign Secretary against the system which could bring nothing but war? No, Sir Edward Grey is not to be charged with belligerent intentions. He sinned in hiding the whole discreditable business of foreign affairs from the Commons and the people. He was the slave of secret diplomacy, and not the servant of the country. If he had thought as much of the British people as he thought of French diplomatists, he would have had the courage to tell the country the whole truth about foreign affairs and the engagements he inherited from his predecessor. Rather than the onus of Morocco and Persia, resignation, political oblivion,— anything, so long as the people knew the whole truth.

We shall perhaps never know all that passed between Germany and Britain in that year 1912, and an attempt to weave a story of the inwardness of the diplomatic negotiations is well-nigh impossible; so inconsistent, so contradictory, are minister's speeches and the writings of publicists of the time. Now that we have Mr. Asquith's Cardiff speech the whole affair

is thrown up in a light which does not make our case look any better. Lord Haldane's speech in March, 1912, when he said, "Strategy must respond to policy, the policy of the Foreign Office," and Mr. Churchill's reference in February of that year to the German navy as "more in the nature of a luxury" do not harmonize with Mr. Asquith's description in the following July of our cordial relations with Germany. The debates on Imperial Defence and the Navy, in 1912, might be read now with profit by many people who wish to know something of the origin of the war; but nothing in these debates gives one a shred of evidence as to any useful purpose being served by the conversations between Lord Haldane and the German Chancellor. "What is the good of diplomacy?" Disraeli asked. The debates of 1912 in the light of recent statements, proves how utterly absurd it was for any one to hope for pacific relations so long as Europe was divided into two vast camps arming to destroy each other. Mr. Balfour in the House, July 22nd, said:

"If we are to contemplate the horrible, and, as I hope, the impossible — if there is to be this universal Armageddon, then, looking at it from a naval point of view, it seems to me that the fleets of the Triple Entente are not inadequate now, and are not going to be inadequate to any strain that is going to be placed upon them. If we can conceive, if we are driven to conceive, if we are obliged to conceive this condition of universal warfare, then I do not say that the fleets with which our interests are concerned can be regarded as inadequate, in any theatre of operations, to the strain which will be thrown upon them. I decline to believe it possible that we alone should be concerned with all the navies of the world except those, let us say, of France

and Russia, who remain neutral in their ports. I hope and believe we should not be unequal even to that strain, but it is a strain which is surely not probable. Surely, if we are to draw these dreadful pictures of international disaster, and if that is a necessity forced upon us, we need hardly suppose that our evil fate, or even the most imbecile diplomacy, would force us into conflict with these nations with whom we have no cause of quarrel, with whom we have been — at all events as regards the Mediterranean Powers — on the most friendly terms within the memory of man, and who, I can hardly believe, will be driven to attack us, and attack us alone in anybody else's quarrel. We must prepare even for that danger, but I think it most improbable. In any case, if I understand the policy of the Government aright, it will be the most perilous adventure that any State could in future engage in, to drag Europe into a war."

All through the year 1912, in debates in the House and speeches in the country, Germany was the one Power speakers challenged on naval supremacy. The organization of the North Sea Fleet was regarded in Germany as a direct threat and a menace — even German pacifists lost hope; and after the Agadir affair, British estimates and preparations had all the appearances of a Government heading straight for war. Though the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary poured oily words on the waters troubled by our foreign policy, the tempest of recrimination abated not one jot.

It is, however, quite clear why Germany tested our neutrality. In asking us to give her a free hand she was really inquiring if we were in a position to give her a free hand. Certainly the time had come when a free hand was necessary for her Imperial existence. She could not imperially afford another diplomatic humiliation. Forces had been unchained by the

events of the Anglo-French interests in Africa which desired other methods of dealing with international quarrels. The Crown Prince and his party were in the ascendency, and they were no courtiers of the pen and the forum; their arena was the place for swords and shells. The more evidence they gathered of British Jingo feeling, the greater naval preparations we made, the easier became their task of overbearing the moderate party in Germany. It would be no difficult task to collect statements from speeches and reviews published over a period of years in Britain which would serve to influence the German Jingo with notions of British belligerence; but our actions were sufficient. In debate after debate in the House, numbers of members have pointed out where ministers and ex-ministers and other more or less responsible men have said things calculated to annoy Germans. Lord Charles Beresford censured the First Lord for dragging Germany into his speeches, and when Lord Roberts at Manchester in 1912, made his famous reference to German preparedness, the *Evening Standard* said of it:

"At a time when all prudent people on both sides of the North Sea are endeavouring to establish better relations between the two peoples, it is mere wanton mischief-making for a man with Lord Roberts's unequalled prestige to use words which must drive every German who reads them to exasperation."

Mr. Churchill went to the Admiralty in the autumn of 1911, shortly before the Agadir question was explained by the Foreign Secretary to the House. We now know why Mr. Churchill was sent at that anxious time to take charge of the navy. Bit by

bit the truth leaks out. A Coalition Government has taken the place of the Liberal Government, and Mr. Balfour has replaced Mr. Churchill at the Admiralty. Now that the latter is free of direct responsibility for naval policy he has told his constituents in Dundee a bit of history. Indeed, at a meeting there on June 5th, 1915, Mr. Churchill, intentionally or unintentionally, let a Cabinet cat out of the bag — a cat too which explains a lot of the spilt milk and broken crockery of the year 1912.

Speaking at the Kinnaird Hall, Dundee, on June 5th, 1915, Mr. Churchill said:

"I was sent to the Admiralty in 1911, after the Agadir crisis had nearly brought us into war, and I was sent with the express duty laid upon me by the Prime Minister to put the fleet in a state of instant and constant readiness for war in case we were attacked by Germany."

Such a statement made three years too late, proves how utterly helpless the House of Commons and the electors are to save their country from the horrors of war.

In the debate on the Naval Estimates 1914, Mr. Philip Snowden referred to something Lord Welby said earlier in that year. Lord Welby was once at the head of the Treasury; he had held the highest position in the Civil Service of Britain and was regarded as a great financial authority. Lord Welby said:

"We are in the hands of an organization of crooks. They are politicians, generals, manufacturers of armaments, and journalists. All of them are anxious for unlimited expenditure, and go on inventing scares to terrify the public and to terrify Ministers of the Crown."

Lord Welby knew what he was talking about. "Crooks" is the precise word, the accurate, the inspired word. No other word would quite meet the occasion.

In support of what has been written on the Treaty of 1839 another paragraph or two must be added. Since the war began some more information has been gained.

It is said that the neutrality of Belgium was the one sole question which kept the Cabinet together on August 2nd; when that treaty was made the *casus belli*. Then those Ministers who had handed in their resignations withdrew them,— excepting, of course, Lord Morley and Mr. Burns. This view of Cabinet action is now put forward by many writers, but it does not explain the strange position of the men in the Cabinet who protested against the policy which enmeshed the Government in the Continental System. The critical day for the Cabinet was August 2nd, the day after Sir Edward Grey informed the French Ambassador at London that, "Germany had explained that she was not in a position to reply" to the question of observing Belgian neutrality, and that he would "propose to his colleagues that he should state that it (the British Fleet) will oppose the passage of the Straits of Dover by the German Fleet, or, if the German Fleet should pass through, will oppose any demonstration on the French coasts." The French Ambassador sent that information to M. Viviani, the President of the French Council, on August 1st, the day before the British Cabinet gave its sanction to the proposal, and twenty-four hours before Sir Edward Grey notified the Cabinet that Ger-

many was not in a position to reply to the question about the neutrality of Belgium.

This method of conducting the affairs of Britain was perhaps quite in order, and a Cabinet which was left in the dark about so many diplomatic negotiations perhaps felt grateful for any second-hand information which happened to come its way. Nevertheless we are told the crisis was bridged by the Treaty of 1839, and uneasy spirits were soothed by the mention of the holy relic upon which presumably some sanguine statesmen thought no Government would lay sacrilegious hands. What the revolters in the Cabinet thought of the Foreign Minister on August 2nd, when he got them to consent to the proposal of naval aid to France before the violation of Belgian neutrality by Germany took place, and what they now think since they have had time to read the diplomatic correspondence, would be of deep interest to those who do not accept the view that making the neutrality of Belgium the *casus belli* was the one sole reason for the withdrawal of all but two resignations on August 2nd. How can any Minister say he was satisfied to remain in the Cabinet for that reason when he consented to naval aid to France before Germany invaded Belgium?

Consider the position of Mr. Lloyd George who, in an interview published in a magazine, explained the attitude he and several of his colleagues took up before the war broke out. He said:

"This I know is true — after the guarantee given that the German fleet would not attack the Coast of France or annex any French territory, I would not have been a party to a declaration of war had Belgium not been invaded; and

I think I can say the same thing for most, if not all, of my colleagues."

Whether the guarantee referred to by Mr. Lloyd George carried any weight with Sir Edward Grey or Mr. Asquith is another matter, but it should be borne in mind that Belgium was not invaded by Germany on August 2nd. Anticipation may be wise as a policy, but it can never constitute realization. Invasion of Belgium on August 4th could not justify Mr. Lloyd George's anticipation of August 2nd.

The *National Review* said several members of the Cabinet on August 2nd "were casting about for a life-buoy to save their righteous souls, which was ultimately provided by Belgium." Now the *Times*, that mirror of Foreign Office reflections, tells us "even had Germany not invaded Belgium, honour and interest would have united us with France." The "imperious reason of self-interest" was our motive in all connected with the Treaty of 1839. Would it not have been the better policy from the first to tell the people the bald truth? Now that the Tory press is bent on mining the neutrality trench in which Mr. Lloyd George and his colleagues took cover, their position becomes every day more untenable and stupid.

No, the neutrality of Belgium will not serve for a pretext, since those who do not take every ministerial utterance as gospel have taken the trouble to study all the diplomatic correspondence and the history of treaties. It is all very well and good for us to be told day after day that Britain must fight this war to a successful finish, but the more the British people are told they must shut their minds to all

inquiries as to the real causes of the war, the more will great sections of them feel disposed to get all the information on the question they can gather. Already the effects of the fatal policy of secrecy and shuffle are evident all over the country. Newspapers cry out to the Government to be frank and tell the people the truth about the conduct of the war and what the real position is after many months of bloodshed; they complain that the seeming apathy of the masses is caused by the policy of withholding news that the enemy and neutrals possess. But no one is bold enough to attribute the apathy to another cause — anterior and more grave — to the amazing inconsistencies and suppressions in the diplomatic correspondence and the stupid stories faked up in certain newspapers about the neutrality of Belgium. The masses read; and many of the papers issued to Socialists and Labourites are singularly well-informed and deal week after week most ably with the questions which forced the Government into a Continental war. It is worse than folly to try to ignore these facts, for if our masses are to be organized along with industries to bring the conflict to a successful and speedy end, the Government should seek now to remove the suspicion and distrust which lie down deep in the minds of the more intelligent workers. That the two great parties should tell different stories of our participation in the struggle is not the way to induce the workers of the country to show any real enthusiasm for the war. Mr. Bonar Law on August 2nd, in his letter to Mr. Asquith, said nothing about the neutrality of Belgium; the support of the Opposition was given " in support of France and Russia." Lord Lansdowne said " we had to

consider our obligations to France, by which we were bound."

Leaving the invasion of Belgium out of the question for the moment, how can the Government continue to base its case on the violation of the Treaty of 1839? We know now how the treaty came into existence, we also know what happened in 1870 to preserve the integrity of Belgium. The full story of our military negotiations with Belgium in the spring of 1906, the interview of Lieutenant-Colonel Bridges with General Jungbluth in April, 1912, and the report of Baron Greindl from Berlin (where he was Belgian Ambassador) to the Belgian Minister for Foreign Affairs, is now known. It is an ugly story and none of its worst features are removed by denials of complicity published from our Foreign Office nor is its brutality effaced by the silly explanations sent out by the Belgian authorities in March, 1915. No one who has studied Foreign Office methods will at this time of day rest content with the phrase "not binding." That military attachés may act as did Lieutenant-Colonels Barnardiston and Bridges, with the Foreign Office ready to repudiate responsibility when the work of its military attaché is discovered,— and at the same time ready to benefit so long as the secret is kept,— will not deceive those who desire straightforward methods in Foreign Affairs. When the Belgian General Jungbluth was told by Lieutenant-Colonel Bridges that Britain was ready to land a force of 160,000 in Belgium, General Jungbluth objected and said that the consent of the Belgian Government was necessary. To this Lieut.-Colonel Bridges said that he knew that, "but that since we (Belgium) were not able

to prevent the Germans from passing through our country — England would have landed her troops in Belgium under all circumstances (*en tout etat de cause*)."

Numbers of British and Belgian soldiers of high rank know that ever since Algeciras, since January, 1906, the British and Belgian armies had looked to one another for common defence. The Belgians looked for 160,000 British soldiers to land at Antwerp where they would be met by a quarter of a million Belgians. The General Staffs of both armies had long consulted on the problem and the plans. The Government not only failed to carry out its pledge contained in No. 155 (British White Paper), it failed utterly to keep the military understanding of the General Staffs. Belgium was thrown away. And when the day of reckoning comes it will be found that Britain will have to answer for broken pledges as terrible to Belgium as Germany's violation of a treaty.

While we are engaged in our usual business of lecturing other countries, belligerents and neutrals, on international law and the sanctity of treaties, we have no time to examine our own position. Indeed it would be difficult to find it now under the slather of whitewash poured on by the unctuous "leaders of thought" since the war began. But it may be said, no question in the history of politics was started with so little knowledge as this one of the neutrality of Belgium. We have not shone as historians. The best said and written in our favour has been scrappy, vamped, and partial. The speeches of statesmen on the question have been remarkable for what was not said; and the surge of sentimentality which arose

from the story of atrocities had no bearing on the Treaty of 1839. The sudden change in the Liberal press on the question, which amounted to a complete volte-face in twenty-four hours, was paralleled only by the action of the Cabinet which made the neutrality of Belgium a *casus belli* on the day naval aid was granted to France. The importance given to the Belgian treaty in the first week of August was quite modern, indeed suddenly new. It was not always held so precious. And now that the walls of our towns are plastered with copies of the signatures of the Powers who signed the treaty, one wonders what is the position of Palmerston in his grave, if any Jingo occurrence can disturb him now. In 1855, when Disraeli proposed the neutrality of the Danubian Principalities, he said:

"There certainly are instances in Europe of such propositions, and it has been agreed by treaty that Belgium and Switzerland should be declared neutral; but I am not disposed to attach very much importance to such engagements, for the history of the world shows that when a quarrel arises and a nation makes war and thinks it advantageous to traverse with its army such neutral territory, the declarations of neutrality are not apt to be very religiously respected."

Palmerston when he spoke no doubt knew the real value of the treaty to which he had put his name. He was not disposed to attach very much importance to such engagements. What action would he have taken early last August? When Germany did not very "religiously" respect the neutrality of Belgium and thought it advantageous to traverse neutral territory, would Palmerston have wasted time lecturing Germany on the sanctity of treaties? Not likely.

The *Times,* sick, presumably, of the slavering about Belgian neutrality, reminded us, on March 8th, 1915, that:

"There are still, it seems, some Englishmen and Englishwomen who greatly err as to the reasons that have forced England to draw the sword. They know that it was Germany's flagrant violation of Belgian neutrality which filled the cup of her indignation and made her people insist upon war (*sic!*). They do not reflect that our honour and our interest must have compelled us to join France and Russia even if Germany had scrupulously respected the rights of her small neighbours, and had sought to hack her way into France through the Eastern fortresses."

It is all very painful controversy, for it casts a slur on the statements of the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary when they replied to questions in the House before the war, and said we were under no obligation to go to war in the interests of France and Russia.

In the 'eighties the Treaty of 1839 was subjected to examination, at home and abroad, and it was then widely known that it was no complete guarantee. One Belgian War Minister, General Brailmont, decided that Belgium must arm and look to her own defences for securing her neutrality. A British Ministerial organ, the *Standard,* in 1880 had told Belgium not to rely on British assistance in all cases. Probably the termination of the treaties of 1870 made the Belgian authorities think seriously of their future position. That the efficacy of the Treaty of 1839 was generally doubted — after the lapse of the treaties made for the period of the Franco-German War — is plain, and in 1887, when another war cloud loomed up, the *Standard* came out with a lead-

ing article on the question. It was, however, a letter signed "Diplomaticus," published by the *Standard,* February 4th, 1887, which raised the question then, and caused the discussion which followed in several of the chief London dailies and weeklies. The *Standard* was then regarded to be the official organ of the Government (Tory). The letter is as follows:

"To the Editor of the *Standard.*

"Sir: Military experts are of the opinion that France has spent so much money, and spent it so well during the last sixteen years in providing herself with a fresh military frontier, that a direct advance by the German armies into France, past the new fortresses and forts that have been erected and linked together, would be, even if a possible, a very hazardous undertaking.

"But if Germany was, or considered itself to be, provoked into a struggle of life and death with France would Prince Bismarck, with the mighty forces he can set in motion, consent to be baffled by the artificial obstacles to which I have alluded, so long as there existed a natural and undefended road by which he could escape from his embarrassment? Such a road or way out does exist. It lies on Belgian territory. But the neutrality of Belgium is protected by European guarantee and England is one of the guarantors. In 1870 Earl Granville, then at the head of the English Foreign Office, alive to this danger, promptly and wisely bound England to side with France if Prussia violated Belgian territory and with Prussia if France did so.

"Would Lord Salisbury act prudently to take upon himself a similar engagement in the event of a fresh conflict between these two countries? It is for Englishmen to answer the question. But it seems to me, as one not indifferent to the greatness and interests of England, that such a course at the present moment would be unwise to the last degree. However much England might regret the invasion

of Belgian territory by either party to the struggle, she could not take part with France against Germany (even if Germany were to seek to turn the French flank by pouring its armies through the Belgian Ardennes) without utterly vitiating and destroying the main purpose of English policy all over the world.

"But it will be asked, must not England honour its signature and be faithful to its public pledges? I reply that your Foreign Minister ought to be equal to the task of meeting this objection without committing England to war. The temporary use of a right of way is something different from a permanent and wrongful possession of territory; and surely England would be easily able to obtain from Prince Bismarck ample and adequate guarantees that, at the close of the conflict, the territory of Belgium should remain intact as before?

"You will see, sir, that I raise, in a very few words, an exceedingly important question. It is for the English people to perpend and pronounce. But it is high time they reflected on it.

"I am, sir, your obedient servant,

"DIPLOMATICUS."

The leading article refers to its correspondent as one "who speaks with high authority," and after setting out the military positions of France and Germany it draws the following conclusion:

"Would the violation of Belgian territory, whether by Germany or France, be such an injury to our honour and such a blow to our interests? It might be so in certain circumstances, and it would assuredly be so if it involved a permanent violation of the independence of Belgium. But, as 'Diplomaticus' ingeniously suggests, there is all the difference in the world between the momentary use of a 'right of way,' even if the use of the right of way be in a sense wrongful, and the appropriation of the ground cov-

ered by the right of way. We trust that both Germany and France would refrain even from this minor trespass. But if they did not? If one or other were to say to England, 'All the military approaches to France and Germany have been closed, and only neutral approaches lie open to us. This state of things is not only detrimental but fatal to our military success, and it has arisen since the treaty guaranteed the sacredness of the only roads of which we can now avail ourselves. We will, as a fact, respect the independence of Belgium, and we will give you the most solemn and binding guarantees that at the end of the conflict Belgium shall be as free and independent as before,' if Germany (and of course our hypothesis applies also to France) were to use this language — though we trust there will be no occasion for it — we cannot doubt what would be the wise and proper course for England to pursue, and what would be the answer of the English Government. England does not wish to shirk its true responsibilities. But it would be madness for us to incur or to assume responsibilities unnecessarily when to do so would manifestly involve our participation in a tremendous war."

That was the official Conservative opinion in 1887; but when, in 1914, Germany did just what was suggested by "Diplomaticus" and the *Standard*, Liberal statesmen were mortally shocked, and advised Belgium to decline Germany's proposal. Must it be said that Belgium strained at a gnat and swallowed a camel? Of course her diplomatic honour is intact, though little else seems to be left at present. But whose opinion will guide the people in the years to come? Whose counsel will be worth heeding when the next war cloud casts its gloom over Europe? Statesmen and "leaders of thought" give us no hope. Only statesmen and diplomatists could

make such a mess of affairs as we see now in Europe. Certain it is, if the people had had control in July there would have been no war.

How to avert another such cataclysm is the question which must concern us now; and, so that we shall know what steps to take to make another such war improbable, we must learn the whole truth of our long connection with international militarism. We cannot crush Germany, we cannot destroy Prussian militarism, we cannot liberalize Russia, we cannot make the Powers disarm, we cannot affect the royal and republican despotisms of the Continent, no matter how great a victory we achieve. And the greatest victory to British arms will serve no democratic purpose unless the British people now firmly make up their minds to set their own house in order first. That is a matter they can turn their attention to without waiting for the war to end. First things first.

CHAPTER XV

ON BROTHERLY TERMS

I THINK I could turn and live with animals, they are so placid
and self-contain'd,
I stand and look at them long and long.
They do not sweat and whine about their condition,
They do not lie awake in the dark and weep for their sins,
They do not make me sick discussing their duty to God,
Not one is dissatisfied, not one is demented with the mania
of owning things,
Not one kneels to another, nor to his kind that lived thou-
sands of years ago,
Not one is respectable or unhappy over the whole earth.
— Walt Whitman.

"The Devil would have counselled neutrality, but Christ has put His sword into our hand." These words were spoken by Sir W. Robertson Nicoll in calling on Mr. Lloyd George to address a large gathering of Nonconformists in London. The sentence has a familiar ring about it. Kaiser, Czar, and Emperor, have, at moments during this war, been under the same delusion. And ever since the first war, some warrior or medicine man, in want of an excuse, has said the same thing of his deity or totem. Yet, after hundreds and hundreds of years of "Christ putting His sword into our hands," war abates not one jot, nor do the nations realize that "all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword."

The meeting began with references to God and

Christ, but before Mr. Lloyd George got half way through his speech he delivered an attack on the Beatitudes as if they were tariff-reform texts. "Now there are men who maintain that war is not justifiable under any conditions," he said. "May I just say one or two words about that? It is not the creed, as your chairman reminded us, of the Puritan Fathers." No one will quarrel with that. The speaker was quite right; it was not the creed of the Puritan Fathers. It was the creed of Jesus. But Mr. Lloyd George went further, and said, "I maintain it is not the principle of the Christian faith." Is that true? Would it be right to say that men who maintain that war is not justifiable under any conditions are not Christians? How far does Mr. Lloyd George's reasoning carry us in that direction? How can such men be Christians? Christians not only make war, whether "justifiable" or not, but this Christian State as a rule spends nearly half its revenue on the weapons of war.

When Mr. Lloyd George confessed to that great gathering of Nonconformists that he, "never read a saying of the Master's which would condemn a man for striking a blow for right, justice, or the protection of the weak," he revealed a peculiar misconception of the Master's teaching. It was an amazing confession to make, but he is a man of great courage, and he made it. Strange as it may appear, the Nonconformist audience agreed, for the newspaper tells us his statement was greeted with "Hear, hear." The revelations may explain to some extent why there are so many empty pews in the churches.

What particular precept the Christian faith is based upon seems to depend on the circumstances

in which you are placed when it is convenient to think about it. Passive resistance, for instance, at a time like this would be party folly. When it is a question of an education rate, imposed by a Conservative Government, then, presumably, the creed of the Puritan Fathers must not be applied. The difficulties of the argument lie in attempting to apply a precept of Jesus to a political party; or, what for the time being is the same thing, the State. It always has been difficult to make the precepts of Jesus meet the exigency of the State. His precepts were for the individual; nations and states concerned him scarcely at all. To quote from a chapter in Matthew, presumably overlooked by Mr. Lloyd George, will be enough to prove how absurd it is to attempt to apply the precepts of Jesus to the State:

"But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.

"Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy.

"But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you:

"That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh the sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth the rain on the just and on the unjust."

Not practicable? Then is it not time for us to leave Jesus out of our party speeches, and have done with cant? What prompted Emerson to say, "God will not have His work made manifest by cowards"? Perhaps it was speeches of the sort delivered at the City Temple. For if the precepts of Jesus guided statesmen and the Nonconformists, the meeting

should have resolved itself into prayer for all who despitefully used them. But the meeting not being convened for that purpose, such a suggestion would have been most inappropriate.

"O ye of little faith!"

Moreover, is there in these days any faith at all in the precepts of Jesus? Nationally, none whatever. The State is fast absorbing the man; and that is bad for Jesus. It is, however, a pity Mr. Lloyd George, when he was discussing with the Mohammedan gentleman referred to in his speech, did not borrow a copy of the Koran and turn to the 17th chapter, where it is set down, "Woe be unto you, for that which ye impiously utter concerning God! since whoever is in heaven and on earth is subject unto him." But the Scriptures have troubled many statesmen, long before this war began. Cromwell not always found the texts fitting in with his actions; and, no doubt, it was a sore point with him that Jesus was so persistently literal. Perhaps the same difficulty presented itself to Mr. Lloyd George. He "never read a saying of the Master's which would condemn a man for striking a blow for right, justice, or the protection of the weak." That may be, but it is not the point. The point is, he never read a saying of the Master's that counselled him to strike a blow for right, justice, or the protection of the weak. Mr. Lloyd George might have read, "*Fear not them which kill the body.*"

So long as men give an interpretation of Jesus which fits their own desires, and do not accept his precepts literally, there will be wars, injustice, wrong, and weak people. The way to end all the misery,

according to Jesus, is, " Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and His Justice." This no state can do. It is for each individual to seek the Kingdom; and he alone can seek it, no one can seek it for him. Striking blows can bring no relief; blows only serve to perpetuate the strife. Surely the history of the world proves that. What did all the blows struck by Israel serve? Why, Jesus scarcely referred to them. Count the national blows struck in our own land since we came from Schleswig to Ebbsfleet, or since the repulse at Abermenai, and what have all the wars, and all the blows struck in all the wars, done for mankind? Think of the wrong, injustice, and the oppression, practised in every reign since Agricola, and then measure how much nearer we are to the ideal. Wars breed wars. Blows cause anger, bitter memories, *revanche*. After two thousand years of wars in every clime under the sun, man still suffers all the afflictions known to his race since

" Kaiumers
Had not a foe, save one, a hideous demon."

Some one has said history does not repeat itself; nevertheless, the histories of long ago present oppressions and agitations, injustices and wrongs, wars and settlements, with a likeness which reminds us strongly of those we see now in Europe. Any one who will take up Thucydides again, and read through those wonderful pages, will lay the book down with the sense of having read something by a modern author recounting twentieth century events; the treaties, speeches, and wars of the days of Alcibiades seem not to have been so long ago. Glance at an old map of Greece, and the Archipelego, and then place be-

side it a map of modern Greece, then reflect on the causes of the ancient wars, and think of the blows struck for right and justice! "Let a ruler base his government upon virtuous principles, and he will be like the pole star, which remains steadfast in its place, while all the host of stars turn towards it," was said by "the greatest personage of the largest empire." Those words were spoken five hundred years before the birth of Jesus; but in China since the time of Confucius there have been wars enough to bring about a great millennium, if all the blows on one side were really struck for right and justice. And what have all the wars done for China? Think of the tramping feet which have passed across this hemisphere in all the thousands of years, and count a blow for every soldier, and what enduring good has been done? Count a tear for every blow, and a drop of blood for every soldier, and all the rivers of blood and tears have not washed away the wrongs that men have suffered for.

The weapons of war are changed, but the heart and soul of men and women remain the same in woe, and pain, and longing for love and rest. The plaint of long ago was sung in the same sad key we hear to-day. The soldier, the soldier's wife, and the soldier's child, are rewarded, by those who send them all their misery, not much better than they were in the days of the House of Chow. The ballads of the Shi-king tell us that much:

"Alone the russet pear-tree grows,
With fruit upon it fair to see.
Kings' service knows not speedy close;
Day in, day out, 'tis long to me.
The year is fast receding, O;

My woman's heart is bleeding, O;
My soldier rest is needing, O."

There was, however, something deeper, something finer, in the feeling in their soldiers' songs than we get from most of the war poets of these days. The yearning for a higher vocation which this little ballad throws out is worthy of imitation:

"What plant is now not sallow?
What day its march can spare?
What mortal but must toil and moil
Here, there, and everywhere?

What plant is now not sombre?
What mortal undistraught?
Poor troopers, we alone of men
Are less than human thought.

Not unicorns, not tigers,
Why haunt we the wild waste?
Poor troopers, night nor morn can we
The sweets of leisure taste.

Leave to the long-tailed foxes
To haunt the sombre grass.
Along the king's highway should we
In our light waggons pass."

It was weary work then to be torn from the highway of life, and toil and moil in the service of dynasts who were "served by the field" but digged not in it. It is weary work now, and dynasts of all kinds seem to have no end. Yes, hope of wars ending vanishes when one reads of meetings such as that held at the City Temple. And Nonconformity will suffer much, for men will say, "What is there then in

the idea of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man?" Men will ask themselves whether a religion that can only offer war such as that now waged on the Continent, for the solution of wrongs and oppressions, is a religion worth maintaining any longer.

It must not be imagined that this struggle reflects the true mind of the people. It should be remembered that a great change was taking place in the minds of workers in all lands. Great bodies of men were no longer content to let politicians do all their thinking for them; they were reading literature unknown to their fathers. Their outlook on life was changing, and some fairer vision for those who labour and are heavy laden was touching their souls with hope. Now the lesson of this awful war, with its crushing burden of taxation, the desolated homes, will eat deeply into their minds, and turn them — where? Back again to the belief in the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man? May not many turn to Swinburne and say with him:

> "Though before Thee the throned Cytharean
> Be fallen, and hidden her head,
> Yet thy kingdom shall pass, Galilean,
> Thy dead shall go down to the dead."

When our religious and political leaders bow down before the god of battles, and approve such statements as "Christ has put His sword into our hands," what chance is there for the Galilean? None whatever. Why hold the Kaiser up to scorn and ridicule for uttering nonsense about the *vieux Gott boche,* as our witty French reviewers say? The chairman of the City Temple meeting might have been full-

blooded about it, and have revived the spirit of 1525. Thomas Muntzer put it this way:

"Arise! Fight the battle of the Lord! On! on! on! Now is the time; the wicked tremble when they hear you. Be pitiless! Heed not the groans of the impious! Rouse up the towns and villages. Above all rouse up the miners of the mountains. On! on! on! while the fire is burning! On, while the hot ground is yet reeking with the slaughter! Give the fire no time to go out; the sword no time to cool. Kill the proud ones; while one of them lives you will not be free from the fear of man! While they reign over you it is no use to talk of God."

Thomas Muntzer called himself a servant of God against the wicked. Recite the proclamation of Muntzer to a Brotherhood meeting and the men would scorn to accept it as coming from a man who, at any time since Calvary, called himself a Christian. Yet there was a conflict of ideas in the Middle Ages, and there were men who preferred pestilence to war. Martin Luther, for instance:

"War is one of the greatest plagues that can afflict humanity; it destroys religion, it destroys states, it destroys families. Any scourge, in fact, is preferable to it. Famine and pestilence become as nothing in comparison with it. Pestilence is the least evil of the three, and 'twas therefore David chose it, willing rather to fall into the hands of God than into those of pitiless man."

It destroys religion, and it destroys states. What will there be left after the next Treaty of Peace is signed? Perhaps some Winwood Reade will come along, and tell us this war has done more for the progress of mankind than all the other wars lumped together. Might not such a man say, this war

proves beyond all else that Nietzsche was right when he said, "A good war halloweth every cause," and that, "The only Christian died on the cross?" What if another Marx should rise and cry, "Workers of Europe! this war has taught you what can be done by war. Take the lesson home to yourselves. Rise! against your religious and political dynasts. Only the devil will counsel neutrality. Christ has put His sword into our hands!" A syndicalist more energetic than Sorel might appear and teach the wealth-producers the efficacy of organized force to overthrow organized capital. It would not be difficult for a man who knows something of the history of states, to present evidence which would impress men and women who have toiled and moiled to get a bit of a home together from the savings of starvation wages, that, generation after generation they in the main provide for munitions of war, and give their best flesh and bone to the Moloch of Nobel, Krupp, Schneider, and Vickers, to win justice for states,— without any State ever giving a passing thought to their claim to individual justice.

What contempt could be poured by a new Lassalle on the catchwords of statesmen: Prestige! Balance of Power! Triple Entente! State honour! State justice! How easily he would convince his audience that all these terms are the gibberish of State sorcery:

> "Adder's fork, and blind-worm's sting,
> Lizard's leg, and owlet's wing,
> For a charm of powerful trouble;
> Like a hell-broth boil and bubble."

Suppose it were shown that, since the revolution of 1689, the debt of this country incurred by wars,

which at the end of this war might stand at not far short of £2,500,000,000, all spent in upholding prestige, honour, and justice, had not brought justice to a single individual; would not the workers begin to think it high time for Government to shape its policy along the less expensive lines of peace, and give its undivided attention to removing all the injustice and misery which afflict the people in times of good trade, in times of bad trade, in times of war, and in times of peace? This war we are told will win for the oppressed of Russia the freedom they have dreamed of ever since a Romanoff ruled over the Slav race; that is to be one of the blessings of the war. But no one has predicted freedom from economic slavery for the workers of Britain. The menace of Prussian militarism is to be driven away from France; but no statesman here says the menace of privilege is to be driven away from the homes of our people. We are to wipe out the stain of Prussian cruelty in Belgium; but when shall we wipe out the stain of British landlordism? Blood in gallons, and money in millions, must be spent in protecting the rights of small nations; but Government makes no suggestion for safeguarding the rights of Englishmen. Any cause but that of man! Any duty but the nearest! Might not some new Vogt or Büchner, in regarding the ruins of the Christian era, say, "Well, if this is the best the faith of the Puritan Fathers can do for mankind, let Satan have a try."

The Christianity of 1866 and 1870 produced the Büchners and the Vogts. And what did they desire for their fellows? Freedom! They saw what they thought to be the failure of Christianity to bring happiness and abundance to those who produce. May

not the latter-day Vogts be saying, "If this chaos of bloodshed, poverty, and grime, is all that Christian civilization after two thousand years of endeavour can do, then let us not only dismantle Rheims, but demolish every architectural and rubrical device that ever symbolized the Cross!" How deep the thought of German humanists sunk into the minds of British workingmen, during that period when our socialists of the Marxian school were introduced to the writings of Continental atheists, only those who have closely watched these tendencies can say. It may, however, be safely imputed that speeches such as those delivered by Sir W. Robertson Nicoll and Mr. Lloyd George, have done more to turn thousands of workers to the writings of men like Vogt, with their biting sarcasm, than all the persuasive eloquence of the Ingersolls and Bradlaughs.

"Theism or belief in a personal God leads, as all history clearly shows, to Monarchism and priestly rule; Pantheism or belief in an all-pervading God leads, where it is in the ascendency, to contempt of the senses, denial of the Ego, to absorption in God, and to a state of stagnation. Atheism or Philosophical Monism alone leads to freedom, to intelligence, to progress, to due recognition of man — in a word, to Humanism."

Büchner has his thousands of adherents in our land to-day. And what has the creed of our Puritan Fathers done to offer a just alternative to Humanism? Will this war help the descendants of the Puritan Fathers to stem the rising tide of atheistical culture and the desire for a Marxian revolution? Has Christianity, as the pound-a-week man sees it, pointed to freedom, to intelligence, to due recognition of

man? Will the worship of the god of battles woo men to the precepts of the Galilean? Not likely. Never has war drawn a single soul to the cause of Jesus.

"'Tis time new hopes should animate the world, new light
Should dawn from new revealings to a race
Weighed down so long, forgotten so long."

What new hope of justice has Christianity given to the race weighed down so long? A new hope was born at Nazareth, but ever since that time Christianity has seemed to do everything in its power to prevent that hope touching the soul of men. It was a new hope: "Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things." No one ever gave to the race of man so great a hope as that. An All-Father who knoweth the needs of all His children, is the biggest conception of God ever presented to man. From it, justice to all His creatures flows spontaneously. It is without limit of race, colour, or creed. It is fundamental, universal, and eternal. What has been done by Christianity to make that conception a real basis for existence? No Christian should dare scoff at atheistic or humanistic aspiration until he can translate the Galilean's conception of God into a leading to freedom, intelligence, progress, and due recognition of man. The tendency to God indicated by Browning in *Paracelsus,* is what man is yearning to understand:

"But in completed man begins anew
A tendency to God.

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I never fashioned out a fancied good
Distinct from man's: a service to be done,

A glory to be ministered unto
With powers put forth at man's expense, withdrawn
From labouring in his behalf; a strength
Denied that might avail him. I cared not
Lest his success ran counter to success
Elsewhere; for God is glorified in man."

We have time day after day to recount the horrors of war's excesses, the atrocities of German soldiers, the starvation of whole provinces, the terrible plight of refugees; the world is appalled at the avalanche of woe. No one remains neutral; waves of universal sympathy reach higher and higher; from all parts of the globe willing hands send food, raiment, and money to procure shelter for the stricken. But who remains neutral in the fight against poverty, drink, and the myriad atrocities of our economic system which are perpetrated year in and year out and seldom rouse the affluent out of their pernicious apathy? What devil has counselled the neutrality of the churches, and held them from turning the whole of their attention to a solution of economic problems? When will Christ put His sword into the hands of all the clergy to exterminate poverty? Without searching the police-court news, or taking the trouble to consult the police-courts, any one who has lived in any street of any British town could write a story of atrocities that would satisfy the cravings for horror of any number of folk who now revel in the exertions of Britain to chastise the Huns in Belgium.

Last night in the street below, two women fought like tigers, while a large crowd swayed and twisted about their drunken brawl. They were young women living in a street not far from the Abbey,

and not more than one hundred yards from the Houses of Parliament. They rolled about the muddy street, and the traffic was stopped while they clawed and smashed each other. The on-lookers were in many respects more interesting than the combatants: old women, half stupified with drink; little children, in rags; blear-eyed men, just tumbled out of the pub near by; and, besides, a motley lot of decent-looking people from the flats and houses who had run out on hearing the screams of the women and the shouts of their neighbours. No one seemed to care to interfere save one or two intimates, themselves drunk and quarrelsome. The language of the denizens, yelling at new-comers the story of the row, was vile; the comment passed on the histories of the brawlers was shockingly Rabelaisian. When the women tusselled out of the road, into the gutter, and then, with their breast-coverings in rags, on to the sidewalk, one bus-driver cried to another, "What about the Prussian Hun, eh?" Then a policeman came upon the scene, and after much difficulty dragged the women off to Rochester Row. A clergyman who watched the small crowd following the women and the constable pass into the gloom, was heard to say, "Terrible neighbourhood this; not nearly enough policemen on the beat!" And yet war never revealed an atrocity like Tufton Street; but the marvel of it is, not that it is so bad, rather that it is so good. It is a mystery how industrious, decent men and women, can be born and bred in that place, but they are; not many, still a few rise out of it with a desire for a fuller, sweeter existence.

"War destroys religion," Luther said. Yes, but

how often have the devotees themselves been to blame for the destruction of their religion? All the religions known from Katmandu to Tianahuaco that have lost their influence, have suffered because the simple original idea has been smothered in the embellishments and rituals of their priests. Would it be nearer the truth to say, more religions have been destroyed by priests than by wars? Who can say? Burnouf? Anyway, this must be admitted: priests have never been satisfied with the founder's original idea. It has been pointed out that wherever a religion is practised to-day, the closer it has remained to the original idea, the larger and more devout the number of its adherents. This cannot be wholly a matter of geography and population, for "Christianity has penetrated to the uttermost corners of the globe."

"I do not find your Jesus in your Christianity," said a Chinese scholar in a lecture on religion; "indeed you scarcely ever mention his name." Was the rebuke merited? What are we afraid of? Here, in a paper read by thousands of better-class artizans, are letters to the editor. One correspondent says, "There is nothing unique or even really new about this so-called Christian doctrine. Socrates propounded it four hundred and odd years B.C." Thousands of well-meaning people have the same notion; they never get beyond the idea that Jesus was a very respectable plagiarist. How often in speaking to gatherings of men, on religious and economic subjects, have the questions taken this line: "Why follow Jesus, when every religion has had its Jesus, and religion does nothing to alter the lot of the poor?" or this: "Wouldn't you advise working men to fol-

low Tolstoy rather than Jesus who knew nothing of modern conditions of industrialism?" Then think of the yearning which prompted this: "Isn't Kropotkin more practical for a pound-a-week man than Jesus?" These are only some of the most reasonable questions remembered in a long period of lecturing. Millions want to know what Jesus means to man. The thousands who tramp day after day, year after year, to the mills, factories, shops, and offices, of our great towns, want to know if there is a better system, one that will put an end to the awful war of toil and moil, and leave man to wage the only battle the Creator intended his creatures to wage, the battle against nature. Who will explain the true Jesus to these men? Who will show them the plan, the system, the order of existence which he said the All-Father meant for His children? It cannot be done during a war, but when the Treaty of Peace is signed will the churches, editors of religious papers, statesmen, and "leaders of thought," lapse again into the same old weary business of hiding Jesus behind a mask of superstition and cover Him with the canonicals of an archbishop? Society will need a new basis when this war is over. Each day tendencies are shaping into efforts. Already the Government works along the very socialistic lines it poured contempt upon a few years ago. Reversion is the dominant note of the period. Swift some teachers have been to point the moral of the change to many artizans. Statesmen go whither the currents take them. Mr. Blatchford says, "If the lives of all the citizens belong to the nation the property of all the citizens belongs to the nation." Will Mr. Lloyd George and Sir W. Robertson Nicoll

accept that doctrine? Will the author of *The New Theology* accept it? In a hundred ways every week the Government is driven along the very path it once told the electors to avoid. Amazing revolution without agitation! What is the great force behind the Government to-day, rushing it into channels it abhorred only seven years ago? The exigencies of an Armageddon? The nation fighting for its existence? Whatever the cause of it, more lessons in the workableness of the proposals of British socialists have been given by this Government, since the end of July, than can be found in all the literature of Socialism from Saint-Simon down to Belfort Bax. The circumstances demand it? Yes, but it may be argued, what is good for the nation in war-time is also good for the individuals that comprise the nation when peace is proclaimed. What reply is to be made to that? Mr. Blatchford says, "To claim the blood of our young male citizens and to exempt the money of non-combatants is to demand that one section of the people shall sacrifice themselves to preserve the wealth and comfort of another section." Why Mr. Blatchford should imagine that this is to be particularly applied to this war is strange; for what else was the upshot of any war, during the past century? Were not all recent wars fought by the many to protect the privileges of the few? No matter how many splendid men of the privileged class are giving their lives away in Europe, the great mass of the soldiers of Britain are too poor to be citizens. Mr. Blatchford says:

"I hope the workers will refuse to be duped by fine phrases and vague promises. I hope they will compel right

honourable gentlemen to grant and make legal the full scale of separation allowance and pension before they enlist."

If all that Mr. Lloyd George claims this war will do for the British nation is not utter nonsense and sham, then Mr. Blatchford asks not for much. Mr. Lloyd George said:

"Cannot Britain, fighting one of the most chivalrous battles the world has ever seen, rely on her children to rally to the flag? That is the appeal I make to the young men of the Nonconformist churches. . . . Through it all I think I can see the hand of justice, more surely and gradual, consciously but certainly gripping the victory."

A fine vision! But if after all the wonderful sacrifice the hand of labour should find that it has only gripped again the sombre standard of poverty, what then? Mr. Blatchford sees something else away on the horizon where the dawn of peace must come:

"This is a great opportunity for the trade unions and for the workers. There are plenty of men for the army, and there is plenty of money to deal justly with the men who go to fight. If the people insist upon justice this war will have done more than anything else in our time to help the realization of a free and sane Socialism in this country."

So both Mr. Lloyd George and Mr. Blatchford are after justice; but when they meet after the war to discuss the settlement for the workers of Britain, it will be found that their definitions of justice are poles apart. Then the big struggle may begin! Right honourable gentlemen may quote Mr. Asquith:

"The great loss of counterbalancing all the apparent gains of a reconstruction of society upon what are called socialistic lines will be that liberty will be slowly but surely

starved to death, and that with a superficial equality of fortunes and conditions, even if that could be attained, we should have the most sterilizing despotism that the world has ever seen."

That statement will not suit Mr. Blatchford; not by any means. "If the people will only insist upon justice," the one says; the other will say, "What is justice?" Who then will determine that question? No statesman has laid down an acceptable definition of justice. The Prime Minister was conscious seven years ago that the State had not even approached the ideal of justice. He described the position in these words:

"Any one who looks around with unprejudiced eyes at the structure of society as it actually is, and realizes, not only the enormous disparities in the distribution of material comfort and happiness, but the still more striking discrepancies between opportunity on the one side and talent and character on the other, will not only find it difficult to reconcile what he sees with even the rudest standard of ideal justice, but will be tempted to be amazed at the patience, even the inertness, with which the mass of mankind acquiesce in what they deem to be their lot. No wonder that constant contemplation of and reflection upon such a spectacle has driven and continues to drive some of the best and finest spirits of our race into moral and intellectual revolt."

The moral and intellectual revolt of the past will be a mere gust in comparison with the whirlwind coming, if something practical is not done very soon after the close of this war. It is not fair, not honest indeed, to ask men to lay down their lives for national justice unless you are determined to give those who live individual justice. The pound-a-week justice to

soldiers and sailors and their wives and children is not justice; it is only the merest business-like expedient for national safety. Justice is something else. What did Mr. Asquith imagine "the rudest standard for ideal justice" to be when he spoke at Ladybank in 1907? No one knows. Mr. Asquith has not put on record his definition of justice. Before we are overtaken by "the most sterilizing despotism that the world has ever seen," statesmen must find a definition of justice which will be compatible with the precepts of the founder of what is called the Christian faith; or else both state and religion may go down mingling with the debris of war.

How speedily we are plunged into this calamity. Who in June, 1914, believed we should be calling for millions of men to enter the titanic struggle? A member of the Government on Sunday, August 2nd, said, "No one will ever make me believe we are going to war." Up to the last moment it was difficult to make some men believe we were in it. The time was short, but shorter notice may be given some day when an exasperated people decide "to take what Government will not give." When that cry so long struggling in the throats of patient, inert, acquiescent labour is at last heard in the land, when the shout for justice goes up from an enlightened people, will the political parties gather with the unanimity which amazed the world when war was declared on Germany? Will legislators unite to grant labour's demand? or unite to deny them the justice they deserve? Deserve! the justice which is theirs by right; by right, or Christendom is a sham, and the Devil has counselled cabinet and church to remain neutral to destroy them. The time is fast coming

when they must choose. What must they choose? Socialism or Individualism? The former we know, the latter has never had a chance; Christianity, so-called, killed it. Socialism aims at equality, Individualism at equal rights. Herein lies the colossal misconception of the ages; even Nietzsche in *Beyond Good and Evil,* throwing his javelin at the blunders of philosophers and religionists, is guilty of fundamental error in mistaking equality for equal rights.

Mr. Blatchford writes of a " free and sane Socialism," but the brand to be fought for may be the socialism which will ask that the " property of all citizens belongs to the nation." After the steps taken by the Government in the direction of Socialism the " great opportunity " will not be frittered away by asking for homeopathic doses. How far are we now away from state control of all the means of production, distribution, and exchange? Flint says Socialism, " denies to the individual any rights independent of Society and assigns to Society authority to do whatever it deems for its own good with the persons, faculties, and possessions of individuals."

It will be the socialism of Mr. Sidney Webb, if it be anything at all:

> " The first step must be to rid our minds of the idea that there are any such things in social matters as abstract rights."

How far that will go beyond the " free and sane " socialism of Mr. Blatchford, may be guessed by those who have watched the experiments of the Government. But how will Mr. Webb's idea fit in with the

creed of the Puritan Fathers? Green tells us that the aim of the Puritan had been to set up a visible Kingdom of God upon earth, and that they regarded the State primarily as an instrument for securing, by moral and religious influences, the social and political ends of the Kingdom. This they failed to bring about, and it was one of the bitterest disappointments of Cromwell's declining years that Puritanism had missed its great opportunity. Think of a twentieth-century Puritan rising in the House of Commons and saying:

"I well remember I did a little touch upon the Eighty-fifth Psalm when I spake unto you in the beginning of this Parliament. Which expresseth well what we may say, as truly as it was said of old by the Penman of that Psalm! The first verse is an acknowledgment to God that 'He had been favourable unto His land,' and 'brought back the captivity of His people'; and then how that 'He had pardoned all their iniquities and covered all their sin, and taken away all His wrath'; and indeed of all these unspeakable mercies, blessings, and deliverances out of captivity, pardoning of national sins and national iniquities. Pardoning, as God pardoneth the man He justifieth! . . . And sometimes God pardoneth Nations also! . . . He hath given you strength to do what you have done! And if God should bless you in this work, and make this meeting happy on this account, you shall all be called the Blessed of the Lord. The generations to come will bless us. You shall be the 'repairers of breaches, and the restorers of paths to dwell in'! And if there be any higher work which mortals can attain unto in the world, beyond this, I acknowledge my ignorance of it."

The Eighty-fifth Psalm and the fifty-eighth chapter of Isaiah. What a strange place — the House of Commons! for Hebrew poetry.

"Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.

"Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven.

"Yea, the Lord shall give that which is good; and our land shall yield her increase."

Strange sentiments these for St. Stephen's. May our modern Cromwells, when they gather at the Meeting to Celebrate the Peace, say, "legislators cannot attain to any higher work than repairing the breach and restoring paths to dwell in"? Will they say, to quote another passage from the same chapter which inspired the old Puritan Father:

"Is not this the fast that I have chosen? To loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?"

Will our legislators succeed where Cromwell failed? Cromwell, if things had gone right with him, meant justice. Isaiah meant justice.

"Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's; and unto God the things that are God's."

That is the fundamental of Justice which Jesus gave to the world. Cromwell's time was all too short to make a vast change. How short will the time be after this war, when the next great opportunity comes! Will it be gripped this time? Or shall some Milton years hence write:

> "O shame to men! devil with devil damned
> Firm concord holds, men only disagree
> Of creatures rational, though under hope
> Of heavenly grace; and, God proclaiming peace,
> Yet live in hatred, enmity, and strife

Among themselves, and levy cruel wars,
Wasting the earth, each other to destroy;
As if (which might induce us to accord)
Man had not hellish foes enow besides
That day and night for his destruction wait."

CHAPTER XVI

AFTERMATH

"THESE are the things that ye shall do: speak ye every man the truth to his neighbour; execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates:"

— Zechariah.

It is difficult now to make the people of Britain and America understand we did not declare war against Germany because her methods of warfare are not conducted according to the Hague rules; neither did Britain declare war on Germany because Louvain, Malines, and Dinant have been destroyed, and the Belgian people have had almost every kind of atrocity inflicted upon them. It is, however, vitally necessary that the public mind should be brought back now to an appreciation of the true position of European affairs as they were before August 3rd, 1914 — if the people are to take any effective part in peace negotiations. Statesmen may find it convenient to fill their minds with all that is now taking place on the battlefields, to the exclusion of what really happened before August, 1914, and what the position of essential interest to the people will be when the war is over. Governments will look after their own interests; but with people it is different, for no Government will do anything really worth while for them unless they keep clearly in view all those factors which have caused so much suffer-

ing and death, and firmly decide to rid themselves of pernicious systems which foment wars.

Let there be no mistake this time. In the past certain officials and writers strove during wars to make people forget the issues which made wars; the reasons given to the public for entering on war were seldom the real reasons; usually the real reasons never reached the mind of the general public. Hence the ease with which Governments launch nations into wars. It is all very proper to express indignation at ruthless acts inflicted on defenceless persons and towns; but it would be most unwise to forget the issues which brought about the strife. Real sympathy with the victims in all countries now suffering from the ravages of war must extend so far as to make a recurrence of these horrors improbable. It is only to be expected that men and women of refinement should be deeply incensed at the destruction of Rheims Cathedral; but that the act should blot out of mind the events which brought the war about is a poor service to art and humanity.

To those who cannot understand why certain people should be horrified at the burning of the Louvain library, the ruination of beautiful buildings, and not be just as deeply shocked at the loss or mutilation of a soldier, it must be pointed out that it is the custom of the world to regard the body and soul of a man as something inferior in value to a rare volume or a grand cathedral. There is nothing so cheap as human life. It is the popular notion that men are easily replaced; and so long as men permit certain sections of their fellows to think they are cheap, not worth the interest bestowed on a building or a book, the world will have little rest from war, and only

very few men will ever have the chance of learning how to appreciate the architecture of their own country, or why the art of Elzevir should be revered.

The people must think clearly this time. They can very well conduct the business of war imposed by the Government, and at the same time keep in mind every circumstance, political, social, diplomatic, military, and naval, which forced us into the conflict. Whether we suffer defeat on land or sea, whether we gain great victories, we all must decide resolutely not to let any event turn us aside from the great work of protecting future generations from the evil which present systems have wrought. The greatest triumph will be won in vain if we forget our duty to the children of the future. To every man who sacrifices his life in this struggle, the people owe, not monuments in stone, but a certain escape for those who live after him from all the secret systems, armament rings, and economic wrongs which compelled his sacrifice.

War is so awful, so terrible, that some men are driven to excuse it by saying it is a biological necessity; they can account for its consequences in no other way. But no war kills so many men as there are children killed year after year by involuntary poverty. Poverty thrusts all the travail of war into millions of homes at all times. Poverty is with us so much, however, that we have become used to it. War, on the other hand, being an intermittent effect, catches our attention. It takes possession of our thought and sways us with a force not compatible with reason. It assails the mind and will not let it dwell long on anything else. War is arrogant, imperious, and vindictive: it will push all thoughts not

of it aside, it will rule over the mind, it hits back if you try to drive it out.

During a war it is no easy task to prevent your sympathy clouding your reason. The whole social system seems to be organized against any individual attempt to concentrate the attention dominantly upon the causes of the war. Governments, churches, theatres, the press, and local authorities, direct their efforts, in the main, warwards; the whole thought of society and commerce seems to be occupied with war; and all desire to question the reasons given by statesmen for participating in the war must be suppressed. It has been ruled already by certain "leaders of thought" that it is unwise, unpatriotic, and un-English, to suspect the motives of Governments, or waver for a moment in swearing whole-hearted allegiance to the authorities: you must think only of the war. If you dare ask for the truth, you are helping the enemy; if you suggest an early peace, you are hindering the militarists who desire no peace until their enemy is utterly crushed. Insidious, bewildering, and plausible, are the reasons given by statesmen and journalists for inflicting a humiliating defeat; without it, they tell us we must not hope for disarmament. No patriot is supposed to ask if disarmament is at all probable. No one must ask if a single statesman really believes such a blessing will follow if the enemy be annihilated. But is it believable? What does disarmament mean? Does it mean that all arsenals and depots will be scrapped, that all yards and ordnance works will be closed, that all ships of war will be dismantled, that all naval and military weapons, plant and ammunition will be destroyed, and that all soldiers and sail-

ors will be dismissed? Impossible! of course! One has only to think of all the commercial and economic consequences of disarmament, to realize how utterly wicked it is for any one to lead people to believe they intend to bring any such change about. Besides, we have our Essens, we have our Krupps, we have our war-party, we have our Jingo press; and if only a reduction of expenditure on armaments is to take place, it must be Britain that must lead the way.

An American writer says, "nothing less than total disarmament will satisfy the people." Has that writer asked himself these questions: "Will Russia disarm? Will France disarm? Again, what power will Britain, after she disarms, have of making Germany, after she is crushed, not follow the example of France in the 'seventies? How long after 1870 was France content to remain quiet? There is this, too, to be considered: Are the men who conducted the negotiations before the war to be the makers of peace terms? Will the old heads serve for radically new ideas? After the war it is quite probable there will be greater Governmental reasons for building up massive armaments than ever before. One has only to think of the position in Central Europe if Germany be utterly crushed. Will she be satisfied to let Russia become the greatest Power in Europe? Will Britain, within ten years, be satisfied with Russia as the dominant Power? What military and naval strength will Britain require to insist on nearly 80,000,000 of the Teutonic race in Europe remaining quiet? If in a comparatively few years France could rise again out of the dust of 1870, to be a Power great enough to seek alliances with Britain and Russia, surely any one with a grain of sense must realize

what Germany will do in a far shorter space of time. It is not meet that statesmen should be expected to perform miracles of that nature. Let us then have done with the silly notion that a crushing defeat of Germany will mean disarmament.

It will, however, be possible to reduce to some extent expenditure on our army and navy if we insist on radical changes taking place in our Foreign Office system. In the first place, the people must make the Government amenable in every particular to Parliament. Legislation must be enacted that all territorial acquisition, treaties, alliances, ententes, understandings, all negotiations with foreign Powers, shall be submitted to the House for ratification. There must be no more secrecy, no more Foreign Office strategy, no more "Commander of the Forces," and no more Cabinet rule. Parliament, and Parliament only, must be responsible, primarily and finally, for all affairs affecting the lives of the people.

Then in connection with the navy and army, all orders for all material must in detail be submitted by the experts to a Parliamentary Committee made up from all sections of thought in the House; and estimates must be tendered, as was done recently in America, so that there will be competition strong enough to break all rings. It is also necessary to make the Minister for War and the First Lord of the Admiralty the servants of Parliament, and deliver them out of the hands of the experts. Democratization of all the services must follow these changes.

Some reduction in armaments might then be made; but let it not be imagined that these changes will be sufficient to preclude the probability of war. They

will only give the people a chance to know what is taking place, and, perhaps, let them have more time to think before they engage in war. No more can truthfully be said in their favour.

Another important change might be made with advantage to the people. There should be a fixed period for a Parliament, so that all members may vote fearlessly at all times. It is a debasing system which influences a member to vote for legislation or supply which he dislikes, solely to keep a Government in office to carry measures he does like. There is not proper freedom for members who, in the main, support the Government; and if the people are to be truly represented, if the opinion of the House is to be accurately expressed, members must be free to vote as they conscientiously desire, without fear of losing some measure on which they have set their hearts.

But the problems of armaments and war are not to be solved by merely making changes such as are suggested above. These problems lie deep, away down at the base of the social system; and they must be considered in relation to the composition of armies and navies in times of peace. Big battalions and great crews mean that soldiers and sailors have no better way of facing the struggle for existence. Grant all the exceptions, admit all the attractions, concede all that military and naval writers say about courage and patriotism; still, the economic character of the problem cannot be explained away. And it does not matter whether the name of the system be voluntary or compulsory, compulsion is the driving force which gives Governments armies and navies; without it in times of peace comparatively

few men would enlist. It is compulsion of a vital kind that lies at the back of the problem; with the rank and file indeed, choice scarcely ever enters in. Choice denotes freedom to decide, liberty of action, an alternative. As was said by a soldier in the House of Commons, only a little while ago, "Recruiting is good when trade is bad." Yes, it is hunger, lack of a home, of decent clothes, of means of keeping clean, which are the chief reasons for men joining the ranks. Who has watched recruiting stations at different seasons, in times of prosperity, and in times of depression, and not seen how powerful are the needs of men in affecting the work of recruiting sergeants? When trade is booming, only a weedy, wizened lot of wretched youths are, as a rule, to be seen reading the posters, or chatting with the men with the "ribbons and the cane." But when depression sets in, quite another type of man is seen about the stations; fellows out of work, hungry, homeless labourers, sometimes artizans seeking the army or navy as a refuge, not with zeal, but with reluctance.

To those who imagine there are numbers of adventurous spirits who prefer life in armies and navies to the monotony of a factory or a farm, it should be pointed out that generations of workers under unfavourable conditions must have had a great effect on many youths who see no better prospect in life than their forebears had; and it is not to be wondered they seek relief in other directions. But if it were possible to make young men understand that the land of their birth was in fact their heritage, that the gifts of God were theirs to enjoy equally with their fellows, they would prefer a life of production and usefulness rather than the discipline of the barracks

and the tyranny of the drum. Uncertainty of work, low real wage, high prices and rent, all tend to cloud the prospect for young men. Even in seaports, wise old men tell the economic tale of how the navy is easily recruited. There is no alternative, they say; sharp young chaps look for something more exciting than a shop or a mill or a farm, with little or no chance to rise.

It is opportunity that is required for the mass of men — equal opportunity for all, indeed — if the problems of armaments and war are to be solved. There is no other way! Arbitration will not prevent the nations arming, and Mr. Bryan's notable expedient, of a year's consideration will in no way alter the economic system, nor limit the growth of armies and navies. It is justice that is wanted, if men are to live in peace.

Citizens who desire peace can indulge in no greater folly than that which is summed up in the phrase, "the best way to preserve peace is to prepare for war." That rotten expedient has been shattered completely. The position of the nations warring in Europe proves conclusively that no amount of "preparedness" can stem the rush of militarists once they get out of hand. Nothing could stop Russia and France, who over a period of years spent over £100,000,000 more on their armies than the central Empires. The "armed peace" of Europe, during the thirty-seven years before the war began, cost her peoples £22,200,000,000; £22,200,000,000 for "insurance"; that is, £600,000,000 a year. The two countries whose estimates in the year 1914 were largest for military and naval "preparedness" were the very countries to be invaded and

great areas of their territory laid waste. These countries, France and Russia, estimated, in round figures, for an expenditure of at least £165,000,000 on army and navy, while Germany and Austria estimated for £122,000,000 for both services. Add Britain's estimates to those of France and Russia and let those who still believe in "preparedness" understand that, round figures, the Triple Entente estimated in 1914 to spend the enormous sum of £123,000,000 more on "preparedness" than Germany and Austria. (Italy was not counted in the Triple Alliance by Bernhardi, when he wrote his book, *Germany and the Next War.*)

The pacifist has triumphed: armaments create wars, and militarism is at all times inimical to the real interests of the people. This war seems to be a great subconscious protest against territorial aggrandizement, bureaucratic tyranny, governmental privilege, imperial dogmatism, and gross commercialism. It is, in a vague strange way, a challenge against a discredited Christianity. While society can build up armaments, pauperize the poor, "bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne and lay them on men's shoulders," "shut up the kingdom of heaven against men," "devour widows' houses," and "strain at a gnat and swallow a camel," Christianity has not done its work. The record is extant: territorial aggrandisement violates the first law of the Creator, by Cæsar taking what belongs to God; bureaucratic tyranny forces the people to support Governments in maintaining that system; governmental privilege is the power which keeps people in subjection through iniquitous taxation and other restrictive laws; imperial dogmatism asserts the

colossal lie, that the State is the people; and commercialism keeps on as an industrial system, thriving on cruel land laws which force labour to compete for jobs and thus lower wages to subsistence-level; making life for the toilers a ceaseless grind in murk and stench, stunting the life of the young, filling the aged with sorrow, and driving our sisters into the sweat-shops and the brothels of our towns.

This war, begun by diplomatists and militarists, has made the peoples of Europe conscious of all these dreadful evils; in no other way can the seeming unanimity of all the forces fighting in all the stricken countries be explained. Each people, now the war is in progress, is actuated subconsciously by the notion that the end of the war will bring the freedom that will raise them up out of the sloughs of the past. The vision of the men in the trenches is one of peace and disarmament; but whether the close of the strife will open an era of an unarmed enduring peace is a question which will depend entirely on the people themselves. Governments have made the war; only the peoples can make an unarmed peace.

THE END

APPENDIX

An article appeared in *The Labour Leader* in February, 1915, which contained the following article and notes taken from the *Pall Mall Gazette* of February 4th and 5th, 1887. At that time Mr. W. T. Stead was the editor of the paper.

England and Belgium.
Are we bound to intervene?
There is no guarantee.

The Standard this morning gives special prominence to a letter signed "Diplomaticus" on the neutrality of Belgium. It also devotes its first leading article to the subject. The gist of these utterances may be summed up in two propositions: (1) England is under a treaty of obligation to defend the neutrality of Belgium; (2) But circumstances have altered since the contraction of the said obligation, and as against Germany, at any rate, England must pocket its pledges, and allow France to be invaded through Belgium without protesting or interfering.

Considerable importance is likely to be attributed to these conclusions abroad owing to its being understood that *The Standard* is at present the Governmental Salisburian organ. Each of the propositions laid down by our contemporary is, it will be seen, likely to be taken hold of. Germany might read the

second as an invitation to invade France through Belgium; France might read the first as an admission of our obligation to prevent, or rather to punish, such an infringement of neutral territory, if we dared.

It becomes important, therefore, to point out that *The Standard's* argument rests on a false assumption. We do not for the present argue whether in the contingencies contemplated it would be England's interest to intervene by declaring war against whichever belligerent might violate the neutrality of Belgium; we confine ourselves to the preliminary statement essential for clearing up the case — that it is not England's obligation to do so.

The origin of the mistaken views prevailing on the question is undoubtedly a confusion between the Special Treaty of 1831 and 1839 which it temporarily superseded. By the treaty of 1870 the obligation of England was, of course, clear and specific. Here is the pledge which was given in the identical treaties concluded mutatis mutandis with both France and Prussia:

"Her Majesty the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland declares that if during the said hostilities the armies of France (or Prussia) should violate the neutrality of Belgium, she will be prepared to co-operate with his Prussian Majesty (or the Emperor of the French) for the defence of the same in such a manner as may be mutually agreed upon, employing for that purpose her naval and military forces to ensure its observance."

There could be no doubt about that pledge; but then it expired twelve months after the conclusion of peace. At the expiration of that period, so the treaty continued:

"The independence and neutrality of Belgium will, so far as the High Contracting Parties are respectively concerned, continue to rest as heretofore on the first article of the Quintuple Treaty of the 19th of April, 1839."

Now, what some people do is to read this treaty of 1839 by the light of the more specific treaty of 1870, and to deduce from the former the same obligation on the part of England to intervene against any infringement of Belgium's neutrality as was contained in the 1870 treaty.

This, however, is a completely untenable proceeding. The treaty of 1839 must stand on its own legs, and these, it will be seen, are by no means very strong. The following are the terms of its second article:

"His Majesty the Emperor of Austria, King of Hungary and Bohemia, His Majesty the King of the French, Her Majesty the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, His Majesty the King of Prussia, and His Majesty the Emperor of all the Russias, declare that the articles hereby annexed to the treaty concluded this day between His Majesty the King of the Belgians and His Majesty the King of the Netherlands, Grand Duke of Luxembourg, are considered as having the same force and value as if they were textually inserted in the present act, and that they are thus placed under the guarantee of their Majesties."

Here, then, we are sent off from the treaty between the Great Powers to the treaty between Belgium and the Netherlands. The seventh article of this treaty (which is identical with the same article of the 1831 treaty) runs:

"Belgium will form, within the limits indicated in 1, 2 and 4, an independent and perpetually neutral State. She will be bound to observe this same neutrality toward all other States."

In this treaty it will be seen there is nothing about any guarantee; all that can be elicited from it, and from the one cited as referring to it, is this, that this clause is placed under the guarantee of "their said Majesties," that is, England, Austria, France, Germany and Russia.

But that is not all. This constructive guarantee must be considered in relation to the party to whom it was given — namely to the Netherlands. For the treaty of 1839 was one between the five Powers on the one hand and the Netherlands on the other; and what the five Powers did was to guarantee to the Netherlands the treaty contracted between it and Belgium, one clause of which treaty said that Belgium should form, "an independent and perpetually neutral State" and should "be bound to observe such neutrality toward all other States."

In the treaty of 1831, it is true, there was a further article guaranteeing the execution of all preceding articles (including, therefore, the one just cited in similar terms from the 1839 treaty) to the King of the Belgians, but in the 1839 treaty, on which the independence of Belgium is now said to rest, Lord Palmerston omitted any such guarantee.

There is, therefore, no English guarantee to Belgium. It is possible, perhaps, to "construct" such a guarantee; but the case may be summed up as follows: (1) England is under no guarantee whatever except such as is common to Austria, France, Russia, and Germany; (2) that guarantee is not specifically of the neutrality of Belgium at all; and (3) is given not to Belgium but to the Netherlands.

OCCASIONAL NOTES

The attempt of the *Morning Post* to prove that this country is under a guarantee to Belgium to defend its neutrality is highly unsuccessful. "The treaty of the 15th of November, 1831," it says, "was cancelled by treaties of the 19th of April, 1839, but the provisions regarding the neutrality of Belgium remained intact." This, as we pointed out yesterday, is not the case. The treaty of 1831 was with Belgium, and the execution of its articles (including one which provided for the neutrality of Belgium) was guaranteed to the King of the Belgians. But in the treaty of 1839, though the article asserting the neutrality of Belgium remains, the guarantee disappears. It is the more surprising that the *Morning Post* should be at such pains to prove that there is still a guarantee, since the only action it would in any case recommend being taken on it is a platonic protest. To construe a non-existent guarantee in order to have the privilege of uttering an unavailing protest is surely the very superfluity of futility.

But the line taken by the *Morning Post* is perhaps not quite so absurd as that which *The Standard* yesterday suggested, and a correspondent repeats this morning. We are to construct the guarantee and are then to declare our obligation to defend the neutrality of Belgium against all comers. But when any particular comer infringes that neutrality we are to grant him a special dispensation. *The Standard* and its correspondent speak only of giving this dispensation to Germany; what is to be allowed to Germany could not be denied to France. Our defence of the neutrality of Belgium would thus be never to-day but always every other day; it would be as-

serted against any one in general, but withdrawn against any one in particular. With such absurdities staring them in the face, it is surprising that our contemporaries do not take the trouble to ascertain that the guarantee which they are so ingeniously but unheroically whittling down does not in fact exist at all.

The Spectator, February 5, 1887. . . . The general idea is that England will be kept out of this war. . . . That she will try to do so we do not doubt, but there is the Belgian difficulty ahead. Our guarantee for her is not a solitary one, and would not bind us to fight alone: but there are general interests to be considered. The probability is that we shall insist on her not becoming a theatre of war but shall not bar — as indeed we cannot bar — the traversing of her soil.

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